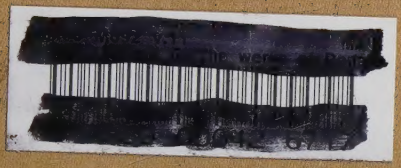

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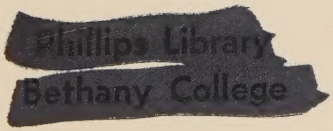


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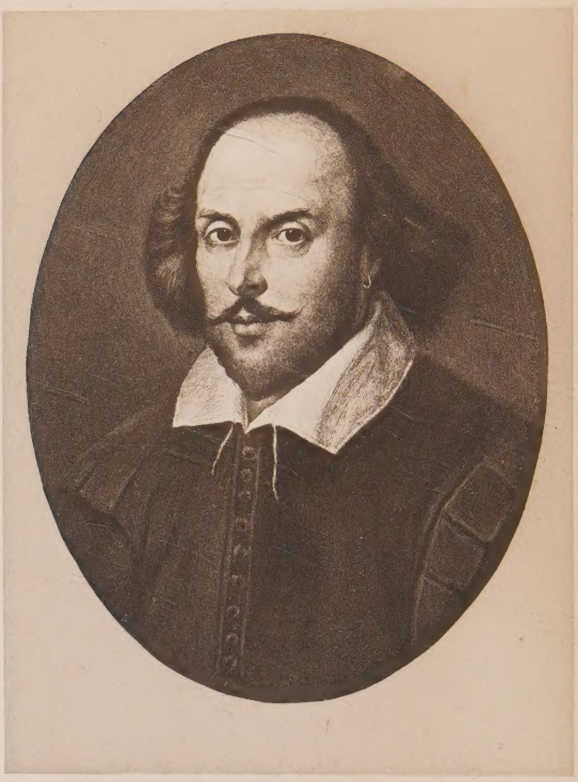

William Shakespeare
From an etching by Flameng

THE WORKS OF
DONALD G. MITCHELL

# ENGLISH LANDS LETTERS AND KINGS

## FROM ELIZABETH TO ANNE

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
NEW YORK ✱ ✱ ✱ ✱ 1907

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# PREFATORY LETTER

TO MRS. J. C. G. PIATT OF UTICA SCHOOL, N. Y.

My Dear Julia,—We have both known, in the past, a certain delightsome country home; you—in earliest childhood, and I—in latest youth-time: and I think we both relish those reminders—perhaps a Kodak view, or an autumn gentian plucked by the road-side, or actual glimpse of its woods, or brook, on some summer's drive—which have brought back the old homestead, with its great stretch of undulating meadow—its elms—its shady lanes—its singing birds—its leisurely going big-eyed oxen—its long, tranquil days, when the large heart of June was pulsing in all the leaves and all the air:

Well, even so, and by these light tracings of Lands and Kings, and little whiffs of metric music, I seek to bring back to you, and to your pupils and associates (who have so kindly received previous and kindred reminders) the rich memories of that great current of English letters setting steadily forward amongst these British lands, and these sovereigns, from Elizabeth to Anne. But slight as these glimpses are, and as this synopsis may be, they will together serve,

I hope, to fasten attention where I wish to fasten it, and to quicken appetite for those fuller and larger studies of English Literature and History, which shall make even these sketchy outlines valued—as one values little flowerets plucked from old fields—for bringing again to mind the summers of youth-time, and a world of summer days, with their birds and abounding bloom.

Affectionately yours,

D. G. M.

Edgewood; March, 1890.

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# ENGLISH LANDS, LETTERS, & KINGS

# ENGLISH LANDS, LETTERS, & KINGS

## CHAPTER I

We take outlook to-day from the threshold of the seventeenth century. Elizabeth is dead (1603), but not England. The powers it had grown to under her quickening offices are all alive. The great Spanish dragon has its teeth drawn; Cadiz has been despoiled, and huge galleons, gold-laden, have come trailing into Devon ports. France is courteously friendly. Holland and England are in leash, as against the fainter-growing blasts of Popedom. In Ireland, Tyrone has been whipped into bloody quietude. A syndicate of London merchants, dealing in pepper and spices, has made the beginnings of that East-Indian empire which gives to the present British sovereign her proudest title. London is growing apace in riches and in houses; though her shipping counts for less than the Dutch shipping, great cargoes come and go through the Thames—

spices from the East, velvets and glass from the Mediterranean, cloths from the Baltic. Cheapside is glittering with the great array of goldsmiths' shops four stories high, and new painted and new gilded (in 1594) by Sir Richard Martin, Mayor. The dudes of that time walk and "publish" their silken suits there, and thence through all the lanes leading to Paul's Walk—which is, effectively, the aisle of the great church. There are noblemen who have tall houses in the city and others who have built along the Strand, with fine grounds reaching to the river and looking out upon the woods which skirt the bear-gardens of Bankside in Southwark. The river is all alive with boats—wherries, barges, skiffs. There are no hackney carriages as yet for hire; but rich folks here and there rumble along the highways in heavy Flemish coaches.

Some of the great lights we have seen in the intellectual firmament of England have set. Burleigh is gone; Hooker is gone, in the prime of his years; Spenser gone, Marlowe gone, Sidney gone. But enough are left at the opening of the century and at the advent of James (1603) to keep the great trail of Elizabethan literary splendors all aglow. George Chapman (of the Homer) is alive and active; and

so are Raleigh, and Francis Bacon, and Heywood, and Dekker, and Lodge. Shakespeare is at his best, and is acting in his own plays at the newly built Globe Theatre. Michael Drayton is in full vigor, plotting and working at the tremendous poem from which we culled—in advance—a pageful of old English posies. Ben Jonson, too, is all himself, whom we found a giant and a swaggerer, yet a man of great learning and capable of the delicious bits of poesy which I cited. You will further remember how we set right the story of poor Amy Robsart—told of the great Queen's vanities—of her visitings—of her days of illness—and of the death of the last sovereign of the name of Tudor.

## THE STUART LINE

HENCEFORTH, for much time to come, we shall meet—when we encounter British royalty at all—with men of the house of Stuart. But how comes about this shifting of the thrones from the family of Tudor to the family of Stuart? I explained in a recent chapter how the name of Tudor became connected with the crown, by the marriage of a Welsh knight—Owen Tudor—with Katharine, widow of

Henry V. Now let us trace, if we can, this name of Stuart. Henry VII. was a Tudor, and so was Henry VIII.; so were his three children who succeeded him—Edward, the bigot Mary, and Elizabeth; no one of these, however, left direct heirs; but Henry VIII. had a sister, Margaret, who married James IV. of Scotland. This James was a lineal descendant of a daughter of Robert Bruce, who had married Walter Stuart, the chief of a powerful Scotch family. That James I. of whom I have spoken, who was a delicate poet, and so long a prisoner in Windsor Tower, was great-grandson of this Stuart-daughter of Robert Bruce. And from him—that is from James I.—was directly descended James IV., who married the sister of Henry VIII. James IV. had a son, succeeding him, called James V., who by a French marriage, became the father of that Frenchy queen, poor Marie of Scotland, who suffered at Fotheringay, and who had married her cousin, Henry Darnley (he also having Stuart blood), by whom she had a son, James Stuart—being James VI. of Scotland and James I. of England, who now succeeds Elizabeth.

This strong Scotch strain in the Stuart line of royalty will explain, in a certain degree, how ready so clannish a people as the Scotch were

to join insurrection in favor of the exiled Stuarts; a readiness you will surely remember if you have read *Waverley* and *Redgauntlet.* And in further confirmation of this clannish love, you will recall the ever-renewed and gossipy boastfulness with which the old Scotch gentlewoman, Lady Margaret Bellenden, in *Old Mortality,* tells over and over of the morning when his most gracious majesty Charles II. partook of his *disjune* at Tillietudlem Castle.

But we have nothing to do with so late affairs now, and I have only made this diversion into Scotland to emphasize the facts about the Stuart affiliation to the throne of England, and the reasons for Scotch readiness to fling caps in the air for King Charlie or for the Pretender.

## JAMES I

And now what sort of person was this James Stuart, successor to Elizabeth? He was a man in his thirty-eighth year, who had been a king —or called a king, of Scotland—ever since he was a baby of twelve months old; and in many matters he was a baby still. He loved bawbles as a child loves its rattle; loved bright feathers too—to dress his cap withal; was afraid of a

drawn sword and of hobgoblins. He walked, from some constitutional infirmity, with the uncertain step of a child—swaying about in a ram-shackle way—steadying himself with a staff or a hold upon the shoulder of some attendant. He slobbered when he ate, so that his silken doublet—quilted to be proof against daggers—was never of the cleanest. He had a big head and protruding eyes, and would laugh and talk broad Scotch with a blundering and halting tongue, and crack unsavory jokes with his groom or his barber.

Yet he had a certain kindness of heart; he hated to see suffering, though he had no objection to suffering he did not see; the sight of blood almost made him faint; his affection for favorites sometimes broke out into love-sick drivel. Withal he had an acute mind; he had written bad poems, before he left Scotland, calling himself modestly a royal apprentice at that craft. He had a certain knack at logical fence and loved to argue a man to death; he had power of invective, as he showed in his *Counterblast to Tobacco*—of which I will give a whiff by and by. He had languages at command, and loved to show it; for he had studied long and hard in his young days, under that first and best of Scotch scholars and peda-

gogues—George Buchanan. He had, in general, a great respect for sacred things, and for religious observances—which did not prevent him, in his moments of petulant wrath or of wine-y exaltation, from swearing with a noisy vehemence. Lord Herbert of Cherbury—elder brother of the poet Herbert, and English ambassador to France—wittily excused this habit of his sovereign, by saying he was too kind to anathematize men himself, and therefore asked God to do so.

This was the man who was to succeed the great and courtly Elizabeth; this was the man toward whom all the place-hunters of the court now directed their thoughts, and (many of them) their steps too, eager to be among the foremost to bow in obsequience before him; besieging him, as every United States President is besieged, and will be besieged, until the disgraceful hunt for spoils is checked by some nobler purpose on the part of political victors than the rewarding of the partisans.

There was Sir Robert Cary—a far-away cousin of Elizabeth's—who was so bewitched to be foremost in this agreeable business that he dashes away at a headlong gallop, night and day—before the royal couriers have started—gets thrown from his horse, who gave him a

vicious blow with his heels, which he says "made me shed much blood." But he pushes on and carries first to Edinburgh the tidings of the Queen's death. Three days of the sharpest riding would only carry the news in those days; and the court messenger took a week or so to get over the heavy roads between the Scotch capital and London.

It does not appear that James made a show of much sorrow; he must have remembered keenly, through all his stolidity, how his mother, Mary Queen of Scots, had suffered at Fotheringay; and remembered through whose *fiat* this dismal tragedy had come about. He hints that perhaps the funeral services had better not tarry for his coming;—writes that he would be glad of the crown jewels (which they do not send, however) for the new Queen's wearing.

Then he sets off at leisure; travels at leisure; receiving deputations at leisure, and all manner of prostrations; stopping at Berwick; stopping at Belvoir Castle; stopping at York; stopping wherever was good eating or lodging or hunting; flatterers coming in shoals to be knighted by him; even the great Bacon, wanting to be Sir Francised—as he was presently: and I am afraid the poets of the time might have ap-

peared, if they had possessed the wherewithal to make the journey, and were as hopeful of fat things.

Curiously enough, the King is grandly entertained in Huntingdonshire by one Oliver Cromwell, to whom James takes a great liking; not, of course, the great Cromwell; but this was the uncle and the godfather of the famous Oliver, who was to be chief instrument in bringing James' royal son, Charles, to the scaffold. Thence the King goes for four or five days of princely entertainment to Theobalds, a magnificent seat of old Burleigh's, where Elizabeth had gone often; and where his son, Cecil, now plies the King with flatteries, and poisons his mind perhaps against Raleigh—for whom Cecil has no liking;—perhaps representing that Raleigh, being in Parliament at the time, might have stayed the execution of Queen Mary, if he had chosen. The King is delighted with Theobalds; so far delighted that a few years after he exchanges for it his royal home of Hatfield House, which magnificent place is still held by a descendant of Cecil, in the person of the present Earl of Salisbury.

That place of Theobalds became afterward a pet home of the King; he made great gardens there, stocked with all manner of trees and

fruits: every great stranger in England must needs go to see the curious knots and mazes of flowers, and the vineries and shrubbery; but the palace and gardens are now gone. At last King Jamie gets to London, quartering at the *Charter-house*—where is now a school and a home of worn-out old pensioners (dear old Colonel Newcome died there!) within gunshot of the great markets by Smithfield;—and James is as vain as a boy of sleeping and lording it, at last, in a great capital of two realms that call him master.

## WALTER RALEIGH

I SAID that his mind had been poisoned against Raleigh;[1] that poison begins speedily to work. There are only too many at the King's elbow who are jealous of the grave and courtly gentleman, now just turned of fifty and who has packed into those years so much of high adventure; who has written brave poems; who has fought gallantly on many fields; who has voyaged widely in Southern and Western seas; who has made discovery of the Guianas; who has, on a time, befriended Spenser, and was

[1] Sir Walter Raleigh, b. 1552; executed 1618.

mate-fellow with the gallant Sidney; who was a favorite of the great Queen; and whose fine speech, and lordly bearing, and princely dress made him envied everywhere, and hated by less successful courtiers. Possibly, too, Raleigh had made unsafe speeches about the chances of other succession to the throne. Surely he who wore his heart upon his sleeve, and loved brave deeds, could have no admiration for the poltroon of a King who had gone a hunting when the stains upon the scaffold on which his mother suffered were hardly dry. So it happened that Sir Walter Raleigh was accused of conspiring for the dethronement of the new King, and was brought to trial, with Cobham and others. The street people jeered at him as he passed, for he was not popular; he had borne himself so proudly with his exploits, and gold, and his eagle eye. But he made so noble a defence—so full—so clear—so eloquent—so impassioned, that the same street people cheered him as he passed out of court—but not to freedom. The sentence was death: the King, however, feared to put it to immediate execution. There was a show, indeed, of a scaffold, and the order issued. Cobham and Gray were haled out, and given last talks with an officiating priest, when the King ordered stay of pro-

ceedings: he loved such mummery. Raleigh went to the Tower, where for thirteen years he lay a prisoner; and they show now in the Tower of London the vaulted chamber that was his reputed (but doubtful) home, where he compiled, in conjunction with some outside friends—Ben Jonson among the rest—that ponderous *History of the World,* which is a great reservoir of facts, stated with all grace and dignity, but which, like a great many heavy, excellent books, is never read. The matter-of-fact young man remembers that Sir Walter Raleigh first brought potatoes and (possibly) tobacco into England; but forgets his ponderous *History.*

I may as well finish his story here and now, though I must jump forward thirteen and more years to accomplish it. At the end of that time the King's exchequer being low (as it nearly always was), and there being rumors afloat of possible gold findings in Raleigh's rich country of Guiana, the old knight, now in his sixty-seventh year, felt the spirit of adventure stirred in him by the west wind that crept through the gratings of his prison bringing tropical odors; and he volunteered to equip a fleet in company with friends, and with the King's permission to go in quest of mines, to which he believed,

or professed to believe, he had the clew. The permission was reluctantly granted; and poor Lady Raleigh sold her estate, as well as their beloved country home of Sherborne (in Dorset) to vest in the new enterprise.

But the fates were against it: winds blew the ships astray; tempests beat upon them; mutinies threatened; and in Guiana, at last, there came disastrous fights with the Spaniards.

Keymis, the second in command, and an old friend of Raleigh's, being reproached by this latter in a moment of frenzy, withdraws and shoots himself; Raleigh's own son, too, is sacrificed, and the crippled squadron sets out homeward, with no gold, and shattered ships and maddened crews. Storm overtakes them; there is mutiny; there is wreck; only a few forlorn and battered hulks bring back this disheartened knight. He lands in his old home of Devon—is warned to flee the wrath that will fall upon him in London; but as of old he lifts his gray head proudly, and pushes for the capital to meet his accusers. Arrived there, he is made to know by those strong at court that there is no hope, for he has brought no gold; and yielding to friendly entreaties he makes a final effort at escape. He does outwit his immediate guards and takes to a little

wherry that bears him down the Thames: a half-day more and he would have taken wings for France. But the sleuth-hounds are on his track; he is seized, imprisoned, and in virtue of his old sentence—the cold-hearted Bacon making the law for it—is brought to the block.

He walks to the scaffold with serene dignity—greets old friends cheerfully—dies cheerfully, and so enters on the pilgrimage he had set forth in his cumbrous verse:—

"There the blessed paths we 'll travel,
Strow'd with rubies thick as gravel;
Ceilings of diamonds, sapphire floors,
High walls of coral and pearly bowers.
From thence to Heaven's bribeless hall,
Where no corrupted voices brawl;
No conscience molten into gold,
No forg'd accuser bought or sold,
No cause deferr'd, no vain-spent Journey,
For there Christ is the King's Attorney,
Who pleads for all without degrees,
And He hath angels, but no fees.
And when the grand twelve-million jury
Of our sins, with direful fury,
Against our souls black verdicts give,
Christ pleads his death and then we live."

Again to his wife, in a last letter from his prison, he writes:—

"You shall receive, my dear wife, my last words in these my last lines: my love I send you, that you may keep when I am dead; and my counsel, that you may remember when I am no more. I would not with my will, present you sorrows, my dear Bess: let them go to the grave with me and be buried in the dust. And seeing that it is not the will of God that I shall meet you any more, bear my destruction patiently, and with a heart like yourself.

"I beseech you for the love that you bear me living, that you do not hide yourself many days; but, by your labors seek to help my miserable fortunes, and the rights of your poor child. Your mourning cannot avail me, that am but dust. I sued for my life, but, God knows, it was for you and yours that I desired it: for, know it, my dear wife, your child is the child of a true man, who in his own respect, despiseth Death and his misshapen and ugly forms. I cannot write much (God knows how hardly I steal this time when all sleep), and it is also time for me to separate my thoughts from the world. Beg my dead body, which living was denied you, and either lay it in Sherborne or Exeter church, by my father and mother.

"My dear wife, farewell; bless my boy; pray for me; and let my true God hold you both in his arms."

It is not as a literary man proper that I have

spoken of Raleigh; the poems that he wrote were very few, nor were they overfine; but they did have the glimmer in them of his great courage and of his clear thought. They were never collected in book shape in his own day, nor, indeed, till long after he had gone: they were only occasional pieces,[1] coming to the light fitfully under stress of mind—a trail of fire-sparks, as we may say, flying off from under the trip-hammer of royal wrath or of desperate fortunes.

Even his *History* was due to his captivity; his enthusiasms, when he lived them in freedom, were too sharp and quick for words. They spent themselves in the blaze of battles—in breasting stormy seas that washed shores where southern cypresses grew, and golden promises opened with every sunrise.

And when I consider his busy and brilliant and perturbed life, with its wonderful adventures, its strange friendships, its toils, its quiet hours with Spenser upon the Mulla shore, its other hours amidst the jungles of the Orinoco, its lawless gallantries in the court of Eliza-

[1] Unless we except *The Ocean to Cynthia,* piquant fragments of which exist, extending to some five hundred lines; the poem, by the estimate of Mr. Gosse, may have reached in its entirety a length of ten thousand lines. See *Athenæum* for January 2, 1886; also, *Raleigh* (pp. 44–48) by Edmund Gosse. London, 1886.

beth, its booty snatched from Spanish galleons he has set ablaze, its perils, its long captivities —it is the life itself that seems to me a great Elizabethan epic, with all its fires, its mated couples of rhythmic sentiment, its poetic splendors, its shortened beat and broken pauses and blind turns, and its noble climacteric in a bloody death that is without shame and full of the largest pathos.

When you read Charles Kingsley's story of *Westward Ho!* (which you surely should read, as well as such other matter as the same author has written relating to Raleigh) you will get a live glimpse of this strange knight of letters, and of those other brave and adventurous sailors of Devonshire, who in those times took the keels of Plymouth over great wastes of water. Kingsley writes of the heroes of his native Devon, in the true Elizabethan humor —putting fiery love and life into his writing; the roar of Atlantic gales breaks into his pages, and they show, up and down, splashes of storm-driven brine.

## NIGEL AND HARRISON

In going back now to the earlier years of King James' reign, I shall make no apology for calling attention to that engaging old

story of the *Fortunes of Nigel.* I know it is the fashion with many of the astute critics of the day to pick flaws in Sir Walter, and to expatiate on his blunders and shortcomings; nevertheless, I do not think my readers can do better—in aiming to acquaint themselves with this epoch of English history—than to read over again Scott's representation of the personality and the surroundings of the pedant King. There may be errors in minor dates, errors of detail; but the larger truths respecting the awkwardness and the pedantries of the first Stuart King, and respecting the Scotch adventurers who hung pressingly upon his skirts, and the lawless street scenes which in those days did really disturb the quietude of the great metropolis, are pictured with a liveliness which will make them unforgetable. Macaulay says that out of the gleanings left by historic harvesters Scott has made "a history scarce less valuable than theirs." Nor do I think there is in the *Fortunes of Nigel* a deviation from the truth (of which many must be admitted) so extravagant and misleading as Mr. Freeman's averment, that in *Ivanhoe* "there is a mistake in every line." There are small truths and large truths; and the competent artist knows which to seize

upon. Titian committed some fearful anachronisms, and put Venetian stuffs upon Judean women; Balthasar Denner, on the other hand, painted with minute truthfulness every stubby hair in a man's beard, and no tailor could have excepted to his button-holes: nobody knows Denner; Titian reigns.

Among those whom Scott placed under tribute for much of his local coloring was a gossipy, kindly clergyman, William Harrison[1] by name, who was born close by Bow Lane, in London, who studied at Westminster, at Oxford, and Cambridge (as he himself tells us), and who had a parish in Radwinter, on the northern borders of Essex; who came to be a canon, finally, at Windsor; and who died ten years before James came to power. He tells us, in a delightfully quaint way, of all the simples which he grew in his little garden—of the manner in which country houses were builded, and their walls white-washed—of the open chimney vents, and the smoke-burnished rafters. "And yet see the change," he says, "for when our houses

[1] William Harrison, b. 1534; d. 1593. It is interesting to know that much has come to light respecting the personal history of William Harrison, through the investigations of that indefatigable American genealogist, the late Colonel J. L. Chester.

were builded of willow, then had we oken men; but now that our houses are come to be make of oke, our men are not onlie become willow, but a great manie, through Persian delicacie crept in among us, altogether of straw, which is a sore alteration."

When the old parson gets upon the subject of dress he waxes eloquent; nor was he without fullest opportunities for observation, having been for much time private chaplain to the Earl of Cobham.

"Oh, how much cost," he says, "is bestowed now-a-daies upon our bodies, and how little upon our soules! How many sutes of apparel hath the one, and how little furniture hath the other! How curious, how nice are the men and women, and how hardlie can the tailer please them in making things fit for their bodies. How many times must they be sent back againe to him that made it. I will say nothing of our heads, which sometimes are polled, sometimes curled, or suffered to grow at length like woman's locks, manie times cut off above or under the ears, round, as by a wooden dish. Neither will I meddle with our varieties of beards, of which some are shaven from the chin like those of the Turks, not a few cut like to the beard of Marquess Otto; some made round, like a rubbing brush, others with a *pique devant* (O fine fashion!).

"In women, too, it is much to be lamented that they doo now far exceed the lightness of our men, and such staring attire as in times past was supposed meet for none but light housewives onelie, is now become an habit for chaste and sober matrons. What should I say of their doublets with pendant pieces on the brest, full of jags and cuts, and sleeves of sundrie colors. I have met with some of these *trulles* in London, so disguised, that it hath passed my skill to discerne whether they were men or women."

If this discerning old gentleman had shot his quill along our sidewalks, I think it would have punctured a good deal of bloat, and stirred up no little bustle. The King himself had a great liking for fine dress in others, though he was himself a sloven. Lord Howard, a courtier, writes to a friend who is hopeful of preferment:

"I would wish you to be well trimmed; get a new Jerkin well bordered, and not too short: the King liketh it flowing. Your ruff should be well stiffened and bushy. The King is nicely heedful of such points. Eighteen servants were lately discharged, and many more will be discarded who are not to his liking in these matters." And again, speaking of a favorite, he says:—"Carr hath changed his tailors, and tire-men many

times, and all to please the Prince, who laugheth at the long-grown fashion of our young courtiers, and wisheth for change everie day."

### A LONDON BRIDE

One other little bit of high light upon the every-day ways of London living, in the early years of King James, we are tempted to give. It comes out in the private letter of a new-married lady, who was daughter and heiress of that enormously rich merchant, Sir John Spencer, who was Lord Mayor of London; and who, in Elizabeth's time (as well as James'), lived in Crosby Hall, still standing in the thick of London city, near to where Thread and Needle Street, at its eastern end, abuts upon Bishopsgate. Every voyaging American should go to see this best type of domestic architecture of the fifteenth century now existing in London; and it will quicken his interest in the picturesque old pile to know that Richard III., while Duke of Gloucester, passed some critical days and nights there, and that for some years it was the home of Sir Thomas More. The Spencer heiress, however—of whom we began to make mention—brightened its interior at a later day; there

were many suitors for her hand; among them a son of Lord Compton—not looked upon with favor by the rich merchant—and concealing his advances under the disguise of a baker's boy, through which he came to many stolen interviews, and at last (as tradition tells) was successful enough to trundle away the heiress, covertly, in his baker's barrow. Through the good offices of Queen Elizabeth, who stood god-mother to the first child, difficulties between father and son-in-law were healed; and when, later, by the death of Sir John Spencer, the bridegroom was assured of the enormous wealth inherited by his bride, he was—poor man—nearly crazed.

Among the curative processes for his relief may be reckoned the letter from his wife to which I have made allusion, and which runs thus:—

"My sweet Life, I pray and beseech you to grant me the sum of £2,600 [equivalent to some $30,000 now] quarterly: also, besides, £600 quarterly for charities, of which I will give no account. Also, I would have 3 horses for my own saddle, that none shall dare to lend or borrow. Also; 2 gentlewomen (lest one should be sick)—seeing it is an indecent thing for a gentlewoman to stand mumping alone, when God hath blessed

the Lord and Lady with a great Estate: Also, when I ride, a hunting or a hawking, I would have them attend: so, for either of those said women there must be a horse.

"Also, I would have 6 or 8 gentlemen; I will have my two coaches—one lined with velvet to myself, with four very fair horses, and a coach for my women lined with cloth, and laced with gold;—otherwise with scarlet and laced with silver, with four good horses. Thereafter, my desire is that you defray all charges for me, and beside my allowance, I would have 20 gowns of apparel a year—six of them excellent good ones. Also, I would have to put in my purse £2,000 or so—you to pay my debts. And seeing I have been so reasonable, I pray you do find my children apparel, and their schooling, and all my servants, men and women, with wages. Also, I must have £6,000 to buy me jewels, and £4,000 to buy me a gold chain. Also, my desire is, that you would pay your debts—build up Ashley House, and lend no money as you love God! When you be an Earl [as he was afterward in Charles I.'s time] I pray you to allow £2,000 more than I now desire and double attendance."

Happy husband!

### BEN JONSON AGAIN

We must not forget our literature; and what has become of our friend Ben Jonson in these

times? He is hearty and thriving; he has written gratulatory and fulsome verses to the new sovereign. He is better placed with James than even with Elizabeth. If his tragedy of "Sejanus" has not found a great success, he has more than made up the failing by the brilliant masques he has written. The pedantic King loves their pretty show of classicism, which he can interpret better than his courtiers. He battens, too, upon the flattery that is strown with a lavish hand:—

"Never came man more longed for, more desired,
And being come, more reverenced, lov'd, admired." [1]

This is the strain; no wonder that the poet comes by pension; no wonder he has "commands," with goodly fees, to all the fêtes in the royal honor. Yet he is too strong and robust and learned to be called a mere sycophant. The more I read of the literary history of those days the more impressed I am by the predominance of Ben Jonson;—a great, careless, hard-living, hard-drinking, not ill-natured literary monarch. His strength is evidenced by the deference shown him—by his versatility; now some musical masque spark-

[1] *Speeches of Gratulation* on King's Entertainment.

ling with little dainty bits which a sentimental miss might copy in her album or chant in her boudoir; and this, matched or followed by some labored drama full of classic knowledge, full of largest wordcraft, snapping with firecrackers of wit, loaded with ponderous nuggets of strong sense, and the whole capped and booted with prologue and epilogue where poetic graces shine through proudest averments of indifference—of scorn of applause—of audacious self-sufficiency.

It was some fifteen years after James' coming to power that Ben Jonson made his memorable Scotch journey—perhaps out of respect for his forebears, who had gone, two generations before, out of Annandale—perhaps out of some lighter caprice. In any event it would have been only a commonplace foot-journey of a middle-aged man, well known over all Britain as poet and dramatist, with no special record of its own, except for a visit of a fortnight which he made, in the north country, to Drummond of Hawthornden:—this made it memorable. For this Drummond was a note-taker; he was a smooth but not strong poet; was something proud of his Scotch lairdship; lived in a beautiful home seated upon a crag that lifts above the beautiful valley of

Eskdale; its picturesque irregularities of tower and turret are still very charming, and Eskdale is charming with its wooded walks, cliffs, pools, and bridges; Roslin Castle is near by, and Roslin Chapel, and so is Dalkeith.

The tourist of our time can pass no pleasanter summer's day than in loiterings there and thereabout. Echoes of Scott's border minstrelsy beat from bank to bank. Poet Drummond was proud to have poet Jonson as a guest, and hospitably plied him with "strong waters;" under the effusion Jonson dilated, and Drummond, eagerly attentive, made notes. These jottings down, which were not voluminous, and which were not polished until after both parties were in their graves, have been subject of much and bitter discussion, and relate to topics lying widely apart. There is talk of Petrarch and of Queen Elizabeth—of Marston and of Overbury—of Drayton and Donne—of Shakespeare (all too little)—of King James and Petronius—of Jonson's "shrew of a wife" and of Sir Francis Bacon; and there are more or less authentic stories of Spenser and Raleigh and Sidney. Throughout we find the burly British poet very aggressive, very outspoken, very penetrative and fearless: and we find his Scotch interviewer a little overawed

by the other's audacities, and not a little resentful of his advice to him—to study Quintillian.

### AN ITALIAN REPORTER

It was in the very year of Ben Jonson's return from the north that a masque of his—"Pleasure is Reconciled to Virtue"—was represented at Whitehall; and it so happens that we have a lively glimpse of this representation from the note-book of an Italian gentleman who was chaplain to Pietro Contarini, then ambassador from Venice, and who was living at Sir Pindar's home in Bishopsgate Street (a locality still kept in mind by a little tavern now standing thereabout called "Sir Pindar's Head").

This report of Busino, the Italian gentleman of whom I spoke, about his life in London, was buried in the archives of Venice, until unearthed about twenty years since by an exploring Englishman.[1] So it happens, that in this old Venetian document we seem to look directly through those foreign eyes, closed for two hundred and seventy years, upon the play at Whitehall.

"For two hours," he says, "we were forced to wait in the Venetian box, very hot and very

[1] Rawdon Brown.

crowded. Then the Lord Chamberlain came up, and wanted to add another, who was a greasy Spaniard."

This puts Busino in an ill humor (there was no good-will between Italy and Spain in those days); but he admires the women—"all so many queens."

"There were some very lovely faces, and at every moment my companions kept exclaiming: 'Oh, do look at this one!' 'Oh, do see that other!' 'Whose wife is this?' 'And that pretty one near her, whose daughter is she?' [Curious people!] Then the King came in and took the ambassador to his royal box, directly opposite the stage, and the play began at 10 P. M."

There was Bacchus on a car, followed by Silenus on a barrel, and twelve wicker-flasks representing very lively beer bottles, who performed numerous antics; then a moving Mount Atlas, as big as the stage would permit; scores of classic affectations and astonishing mythologic mechanism; and at last, with a great bevy of pages, twelve cavaliers in masques—the Prince Charles (afterward Charles I.) being chief of the revellers.

"These all choose partners and dance every kind of dance—every cavalier selecting his lady.

After an hour or two of this, they, being tired, began to flag;" whereat—says the chaplain—"the choleric King James got impatient and shouted out from his box, 'Why don't they dance? What did you make me come here for? Devil take you all—dance!'"

What a light this little touch of the old gentleman's choleric spirit throws upon the court manners of that time!

Then Buckingham, the favorite, whom Scott introduces in *Nigel* as Steenie—comes forward to placate the King, and cuts a score of lofty capers with so much grace and agility as not only to quiet the wrathy monarch but to delight everybody. Afterward comes the banquet, at which his most sacred majesty gets tipsy, and amid a general smashing of Venetian glass, continues the Italian gentleman, "I went home, very tired, at two o'clock in the morning."

Ah, if we could only unearth some good old play-going chaplain's account of how Shakespeare appeared—of his dress—of his voice—and with what unction of manner he set before the little audience at the Globe, or Blackfriars, his part of Old Adam (which there is reason to believe he took), in his own delightful play of "As You Like It." What would we not

give to know the very attitude, and the wonderful pity in his look, with which he spoke to his young master, Orlando:—

"Oh, my sweet master, what makes you here?
Why are you virtuous? Why do people love you?
Oh, what a world is this, when what is comely
Envenoms him, that bears it!"

## SHAKESPEARE AND THE GLOBE

NEITHER our Italian friend, however, nor Ben Jonson have given us any such glimpse as we would like to have of that keen-witted Warwickshire actor and playwright who, in the early years of James' reign, is living off and on in London; having bought, within a few years —as the records tell us—a fine New Place in Stratford, and has won great favor with that King Jamie, who with all his pedantry knows a good thing when he sees it, or hears it. Indeed, there is some warrant for believing that the King wrote a commendatory letter to the great dramatist, of which Mr. Black, in our time, makes shadowy use in that Shakespearean romance of his[1] you may have encountered.

[1] *Judith Shakespeare,* by William Black. The story of the royal letter appears to rest mainly on the evidence of

The novelist gives us some very charming pictures of the Warwickshire landscape, and he has made Miss Judith Shakespeare very arch and engaging; but it was perilous ground for any novelist to venture upon; and I think the author felt it, and has shown a timidity and doubt that have hampered him; I do not recognize in it the breezy freedom that belonged to his treatment of things among the Hebrides. But to return to "Judith's father"—he is part proprietor of the Globe Theatre, taking in lots of money (old cronies say) in that way; was honored by the Queen, too, before her death, and had written that "Merry Wives of Windsor," tradition says, to show Queen Bess how the Fat Falstaff would carry his great hulk as a lover.

We might meet this Shakespeare at any Mermaid Tavern we spoke of; but should look out for him more hopefully about one of the playhouses. Going from the Mermaid, supposing we were putting up there in those days, we should strike across St. Paul's Churchyard, and possibly taking Paul's Walk, and so down

William Oldys (not a strong authority), who says it originated with Sheffield, Duke of Buckingham, who had it from Sir William D'Avenant. Dr. Drake, however, as well as Farmer, fully accredit the anecdote.

Ludgate Hill; and thence on, bearing southerly to Blackfriars; which locality has now its commemoration in the name of Playhouse Yard, and is in a dingy quarter, with dingy great warehouses round it. Arrived there we should learn, perhaps by a poster on the door, that the theatre would not open till some later hour. Blackfriars[1] was a private theatre, roofed over entirely and lighted with candles; also, through Elizabeth's time, opening generally on Sundays—that being a popular day—hours being chosen outside of prayer or church-time; and this public dramatic observance of Sunday was only forbidden by express enactment after James came to the throne. At her palace, and with her child-players, Sunday was always Queen Elizabeth's favorite day.

This Blackfriars was at only a little remove down the Thames from that famous Whitefriars region of which there is such melo-

[1] The Globe was the summer theatre, the Blackfriars the winter theatre—the same company playing much at both. The hour for opening in Elizabeth's time was usually one o'clock. Dekker (*Horne Booke,* 1609) names three as the hour; and doubtless there were occasions when—in the private theatres—plays began after nightfall. Fletcher and Shakespeare were at the head of what was called the Lord Chamberlain's Company. By license of James I. (1603) this virtually became the King's Company.

dramatic account in Scott's story of *Nigel,* where Old Trapbois comes to his wild death. If we went to the Globe Theatre, we should push on down to the river—near to a point where Blackfriars Bridge now spans it—then, a clear stream free from all bridges, save only London Bridge, which would have loomed, with its piles of houses, out of the water on our left. At the water-side we should take wherry (fare only one penny) and be sculled over to Southwark, landing at an open place—Bankside—near which was Paris Garden, where bear-baiting was still carried on with high kingly approval; and thereabout, on a spot now swallowed in a gulf of smoked and blackened houses—just about the locality where at a later day stood Richard Baxter's Chapel, rose the octagonal walls of the Globe Theatre, in which Mr. Shakespeare was concerned as player and part proprietor. There should be a flag flying aloft and people lounging in, paying their two-pence, their sixpences, their shillings, or even their half-crowns—as they chose the commoner or the better places. Only the stage is roofed over; perhaps also a narrow space all round the walls; from all otherwheres within, one could look up straight into the murky sky of London. There is apple-

eating, nut-cracking, and some vender of pamphlets bawling "Buy a new booke;" such a one perhaps as that *Horne Booke of Gulls*—which I told you of, written by Dekker—would have been a favorite for such venders. Or, possibly through urgence of the Court Chamberlain, King James' *Counterblaste to Tobacco* may be put on sale there, to mend manners; or Joshua Sylvester's little poem to the same end, entitled *Tobacco battered and the Pipes shattered about their Eares that idly idolize so base and barbarous a Weed, by a Volley of hot shot, thundered from Mount Helicon.*

"How juster will the Heavenly God,
Th' Eternal, punish with infernal rod
In Hell's dark furnace, with black fumes to choak
Those that on Earth will still offend in Smoak."

But hot as this sort of shot might have been, we may be sure that some fast fellows, the critics and *æsthetes* of those days, will have their place on the stage, sprawling there upon the edge, before the actors appear; criticising players and audience and smoking their long pipes; may be taking a hand at cards, and if very "swell," tossing the cards over to people

in the pit when once their game is over—a showy and arrogant largess.

Perhaps Ben Jonson will come swaggering in, having taken a glass, or two, very likely, or even three, in the tap-room of the Tabard Tavern—the famous Tabard of Chaucer's tales—which is within practicable drinking distance; and Will Shakespeare, if indeed there, may greet him across two benches with, "Ah, Ben," and he—tipsily in reply, with "Ah, my good fellow, Will." Those prim young men, Beaumont and Fletcher, who are just now pluming their wings for such dramatic flights as these two older men have made, may also be there. And the play will open with three little bursts of warning music; always a prologue with a first representation; and it may chance that the very one we have lighted upon, is some special exhibit of that great military spectacle of "Henry V." which we know, and all the times between have known; and it may be that this Shakespeare, being himself author and in a sense manager of these boards, may come forward to speak the prologue himself; how closely we would have eyed him, and listened:—

"Pardon, gentles all;
The flat, unraiséd spirit, that hath dared

On this unworthy scaffold to bring forth
So great an object: Can this cockpit hold
The vasty fields of France? or may we cram
Within this wooden O, the very casques
That did affright the air at Agincourt?
Piece out our imperfections with your thoughts,
Into a thousand parts divide one man;
Think, when we talk of horses, that you see them
Printing their proud hoofs i' the receiving earth,
For 'tis your thoughts that now must deck our kings,
Carry them here and there, jumping o'er times;
Turning the accomplishment of many years
Into an hour-glass."

And then the play begins and we see them all: Gloucester and the brave king, and Bedford, and Fluellen, and the pretty Kate of France (by some boy-player), and Nym, and Pistol, and Dame Quickly; and the drums beat, and the roar of battle breaks and rolls away—as only Shakespeare's words can make battles rage; and the French Kate is made Queen, and so the end comes.

All this might have happened; I have tried to offend against no historic data of places, or men, or dates in this summing up. And from the doors of the Globe, where we are assailed by a clamor of watermen and linkboys, we go

down to the river's edge—scarce a stone's-throw distant—and take our wherry, on the bow of which a light is now flaming, and float away in the murky twilight upon that great historic river—watching the red torch-fires, kindling one by one along the Strand shores, and catching the dim outline of London houses—the London of King James I.—looming through the mists behind them.

In our next chapter I shall have somewhat more to say of the Stratford man—specially of his personality; and more to say of King James, and of his English Bible.

## CHAPTER II

We have had our glimpse of the first (English) Stuart King, as he made his shambling way to the throne—beset by spoilsmen; we had our glimpse, too, of that haughty, high-souled, unfortunate Sir Walter Raleigh, whose memory all Americans should hold in honor. We had our little look through the magic-lantern of Scott at the toilet and the draggled feathers of the pedant King James, and upon all that hurly-burly of London where the Scotch Nigel adventured; and through the gossipy Harrison we set before ourselves a great many quaint figures of the time. We saw a bride whose silken dresses whisked along those balusters of Crosby Hall, which brides of our day may touch reverently now; we followed Ben Jonson, afoot, into Scotland, and among the pretty scenes of Eskdale; and thereafter we sauntered down Ludgate Hill, and so, by wherry, to Bankside and the Globe, where we paid our shilling, and passed the time o' day with Ben

Jonson; and saw young Francis Beaumont, and smelt the pipes; and had a glimpse of Shakespeare. But we must not, for this reason, think that all the world of London smoked, or all the world of London went to the Globe Theatre.

### GOSSON AND OTHER PURITANS

THERE was at this very time, living and preaching, in the great city, a certain Stephen Gosson[1]—well-known, doubtless, to Ben Jonson and his fellows—who had received a university education, who had written delicate pastorals and other verse, which—with many people—ranked him with Spenser and Sidney; who had written plays too, but who, somehow conscience-smitten, and having gone over from all dalliance with the muses to extremest Puritanism, did thereafter so inveigh against *"Poets, Players, Jesters, and such like Caterpillars of the Commonwealth"*—as he called them—as made him rank, for fierce invective, with that Stubbes whose onslaught upon the wickedness of the day I cited. He had called his discourse *"pleasant for Gentlemen that favor Learning, and profitable for all that will follow Vertue."*

[1] Gosson was an Oxford man; b. 1555; d. 1624.

He represented the Puritan feeling—which was growing in force—in respect to poetry and the drama; and, I have no doubt, regarded Mr. William Shakespeare as one of the best loved and trusted emissaries of Satan.

But between the rigid sectarians and those of easy-going faith who were wont to meet at the Mermaid Tavern, there was a third range of thinking and of thinkers;—not believing all poetry and poets Satanic, and yet not neglectful of the offices of Christianity. The King himself would have ranked with these; and so also would the dignitaries of that English Church of which he counted himself, in some sense, the head. It was in the first year of his reign, 1603—he having passed a good part of the summer in hunting up and down through the near counties—partly from his old love of such things, partly to be out of reach of the plague which ravaged London that year (carrying off over thirty thousand people); it was, I say, in that first year that, at the instance of some good Anglicans, he issued a proclamation—*"Touching a meeting for the hearing and for the determining things pretended to be amiss in the Church."*

Out of this grew a conference at Hampton Court, in January, 1604. Twenty-five were

called to that gathering, of whom nine were Bishops. On no one day were they all present; nor did there seem promise of any great outcome from this assemblage, till one Rainolds, a famous Greek scholar of Oxford, "moved his Majesty that there might be a new translation of the Bible, because previous ones were not answerable altogether to the truth of the Original."

### KING JAMES'S BIBLE

There was discussion of this; my Lord Bancroft, Bishop of London, venturing the sage remark that if every man's humor should be followed, there would be no end of translating. In the course of the talk we may well believe that King James nodded approval of anything that would flatter his kingly vanities, and shook his big unkempt head at what would make call for a loosening of his purse-strings. But out of this slumberous conference, and out of these initial steps, did come the scriptural revision; and did come that noble monument of the English language, and of the Christian faith, sometimes called "King James's Bible," though —for anything that the old gentleman had to do vitally or specifically with the revision—it

might as well have been called the Bible of King James's tailor, or the Bible of King James's cat.

It must be said, however, for the King, that he did press for a prompt completion of the work, and that "it should be done by the best learned in both universities." Indeed, if the final dedication of the translators to the "most High, and Mighty Prince James" (which many a New England boy of fifty years ago wrestled with in the weary lapses of too long a sermon) were to be taken in its literal significance, the obligations to him were immense; after thanking him as "principal mover and author of the work," the dedication exuberantly declares that "the hearts of all your loyal and religious people are so bound and firmly knit unto you, that your very name is precious among them: Their eye doth behold you with comfort, and they bless you in their hearts, as that sanctified person, who, under God, is the immediate author of their true Happiness." The King's great reverence for the Scriptures is abundantly evidenced by that little tractate of his—the *Basilikon Doron*—not written for publication (though surreptitiously laid hold of by the book-makers) but intended for the private guidance of his eldest son, Prince Henry, in

that time heir to the throne. The little book shows large theologic discretions; and—saving some scornings of the "vaine, Pharisaicall Puritaines"—is written in a spirit which might be safely commended to later British Princes.

"When yee reade the Scripture [says the King] reade it with a sanctified and chast hart; admire reverentlie such obscure places as ye understand not, blaming only your own capacitie; reade with delight the plaine places, and study carefully to understand those that are somewhat difficile: preasse to be a good texture; for the Scripture is ever the best interpreter of itselfe."

Some forty odd competent men were set out from the universities and elsewheres for the work of the Bible revision. Yet they saw none of King James's money, none from the royal exchequer; which indeed from the King's disorderly extravagances, that helped nobody, was always lamentably low. The revisers got their rations, when they came together in conference, in Commons Hall, or where and when they could; and only at the last did some few of them who were engaged in the final work of proof-reading, get a stipend of some thirty shillings a week from that fraternity of book-

makers who were concerned with the printing and selling of the new Bible.

When the business of revision actually commenced it is hard to determine accurately; but it was not till the year 1611—eight years after the Hampton Conference—that an edition was published by printer Barker (who, or whose company, was very zealous about the matter, it being a fat job for him) and so presently, under name of King James' version "appointed (by assemblage of Bishops) to be read in churches," it came to be the great Bible of the English-speaking world—then, and thenceforward. And now, who were the forty men who dealt so wisely and sparingly with the old translators; who came to their offices of revision with so tender a reverence, and who put such nervous, masculine, clear-cut English into their own emendations of this book as to leave it a monument of Literature? Their names are all of record: and yet if I were to print them, the average reader would not recognize, I think, a single one out of the twoscore.[1] You would not find Bacon's name, who, not

[1] Among the more important names were those of Bishop Andrewes (of Winchester, friend of Herbert, and Dr. Donne)—famous for his oriental knowledges: Bedwell (of Tottingham), a distinguished Arabic scholar: Sir Henry Savile, a very learned layman, and

far from this time was writing some of his noblest essays, and also writing (on the King's suggestion) about preaching and Church management. You would not find the name of William Camden, who was then at the mellow age of sixty, and of a rare reputation for learning and for dignity of character. You would not find the name of Lord Herbert of Cherbury, who though writing much of religious intention, was deistically inclined; nor of Robert Burton, churchman, and author of that famous book *The Anatomy of Melancholy* —then in his early prime; nor of Sir Walter Raleigh, nor of Sir Thomas Overbury—both now at the date of their best powers; nor yet would one find mention of John Donne,[1] though he came to be Dean of St. Paul's and wrote poems the reader may—and ought to know; nor, yet again, is there any hearing of Sir John Davies, who had commended himself

warden of Merton College: Rainolds, representing the Puritan wing of the Church, and President of Corpus Christi, Oxford; and Chaderton, Master of Emmanuel, and representing the same wing of the Church from Cambridge.

[1] John Donne, son of a London merchant, b. 1573, and d. 1631. There is a charming life of him by Izaak Walton. The Grosart edition of his writings is fullest and best.

specially to King James, and who had written poetically and reverently on the *Immortality of the Soul*[2] in strains that warrant our citing a few quatrains:—

"At first, her mother Earth she holdeth dear,
And doth embrace the world and worldly things:
She flies close by the ground, and hovers here,
And mounts not up with her celestial wings.

"Yet under heaven she cannot light on aught
That with her heavenly nature doth agree;
She cannot rest, she cannot fix her thought,
She cannot in this world contented be:

"For who did ever yet, in honor, wealth,
Or pleasure of the sense, contentment find?
Who ever ceased to wish, when he had health?
Or, having wisdom, was not vexed in mind?

"Then, as a bee which among weeds doth fall,
Which seem sweet flowers, with lustre fresh and gay;
She lights on that and this, and tasteth all,
But, pleased with none, doth rise and soar away!"

[2] From his poem of *Nosce Teipsum*, published in 1599. John Davies b. in Wiltshire about 1570, and d. 1626.

This is a long aside; but it gives us good breath to go back to our translators, who if not known to the general reader, were educators or churchmen of rank; men of trained minds who put system and conscience and scholarship into their work. And their success in it, from a literary aspect only, shows how interfused in all cultivated minds of that day was a keen apprehension and warm appreciation of the prodigious range, and the structural niceties, and rhythmic forces of that now well-compacted English language which Chaucer and Spenser and Shakespeare, each in his turn, had published to the world, with brilliant illustration.

And will this old Bible of King James' version continue to be held in highest reverence? Speaking from a literary point of view—which is our stand-point to-day—there can be no doubt that it will; nor is there good reason to believe that—on literary lines—any other will ever supplant it. There may be versions that will be truer to the Greek; there may be versions that will be far truer to the Hebrew; there may be versions that will mend its science—that will mend its archæology—that will mend its history; but never one, I think, which, as a whole, will greatly mend that orderly and

musical and forceful flow of language springing from early English sources, chastened by Elizabethan culture and flowing out—freighted with Christian doctrine—over all lands where Saxon speech is uttered. Nor in saying this, do I yield a jot to any one—in respect for that modern scholarship which has shown bad renderings from the Greek, and possibly far worse ones from the Hebrew. No one—it is reasonably to be presumed—can safely interpret doctrines of the Bible without the aid of this scholarship and of the "higher criticism;" and no one will be henceforth fully trusted in such interpretations who is ignorant of, or who scorns the recent revisions.

And yet the old book, by reason of its strong, sweet, literary quality, will keep its hold in most hearts and most minds. Prove to the utmost that the Doxology,[1] at the end of the Lord's Prayer, is an interpolation—that it is nowhere in the earlier Greek texts (and I

[1] Dr. Shedd (*Addenda* to Lange's *Matthew*) says—"Probably it was the prevailing custom of the Christians *in the East,* from the beginning to pray the Lord's Prayer, with the Doxology." It certainly appears in earliest Syriac version (*Peschito,* so called, of second century). It does not appear in the Wyclif of 1380. It will be found, however, in the Tyndale of 1534—which I am led to believe is its first appearance in an accredited English translation.

believe it is abundantly proven), and yet hundreds, and thousands, and tens of thousands who use that invocation, will keep on saying, in the rhythmic gush of praise, which is due maybe to some old worthy of the times of the Henrys (perhaps Tyndale himself)—"For thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory, for ever and ever, Amen!"

And so with respect to that splendid Hebraic poem of Job, or that mooted book of Ecclesiastes; no matter what critical scholarship may do in amplification or curtailment, it can never safely or surely refine away the marvellous graces of their strong, old English current—burdened with tender memories—murmurous with hopes drifting toward days to come—"or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern."

The scientists may demonstrate that this ancient oak—whose cooling shadows have for so many ages given comfort and delight—is overgrown, unshapely, with needless nodules, and corky rind, and splotches of moss, and seams that show stress of gone-by belaboring tempests; they may make it clear that these things are needless for its support—that they cover and cloak its normal organic structure; but

who shall hew them clean away, and yet leave in fulness of stature and of sheltering power the majestic growth we venerate? I know the reader may say that this is a sentimental view; so it is; but science cannot measure the highest beauty of a poem; and with whose, or what fine scales shall we weigh the sanctities of religious awe?

It must be understood, however, that the charms of the "King James Version" do not lie altogether in Elizabethan beauties of phrase, or in Jacobean felicities; there are quaint archaisms in it which we are sure have brought their pleasant reverberations of lingual sound all the way down from the days of Coverdale, of Tyndale, and of Wyclif.

A few facts about the printing and publishing of the early English Bibles it may be well to call to mind. In a previous chapter I spoke of the fatherly edicts against Bible-reading and Bible-owning in the time of Henry VIII.; but the reign of his son, Edward VI., was a golden epoch for the Bible printers. During the six years when this boy-king held the throne, fifty editions—principally Coverdale's and Tyndale's versions—were issued, and no less than fifty-seven printers were engaged in their manufacture.

Queen Mary made difficulties again, of which a familiar and brilliant illustration may be found in that old New England Primer which sets forth in ghastly wood-cut "the burning of Mr. John Rogers at the Stake, in Smithfield." Elizabeth was coy; she set a great many prison-doors open; and when a courtier said, "May it please your Majesty, there be sundry other prisoners held in durance, and it would much comfort God's people that they be set free." She asked, "Whom?" And the good Protestant said, "Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John." But she—young as she was—showed her monarch habit. "Let us first find," said she, "if they wish enlargement."

But she had accepted the gift of a Bible on first passing through Cheapside—had pressed it to her bosom in sight of the street people, and said she should "oft read that holy book"—which was easy to say, and becoming.

In the early days of her reign the Genevan Bible, always a popular one in England, was completed, and printed mostly in Geneva; but a privilege for printing it in England was assigned to John Bodley—that John Bodley whose more eminent son, Sir Thomas, afterward founded and endowed the well-known Bodleian Library at Oxford.

In the early part of Elizabeth's reign appeared, too, the so-called Bishops' Bible (now a rare book), under charge of Archbishop Parker, fifteen dignitaries of the Church being joined with him in its supervision. There were engravings on copper and wood—of Elizabeth, on the title-page—of the gay Earl of Leicester at the head of the Book of Joshua, and of old, nodding Lord Burleigh in the Book of Psalms. But the Bishops' Bible was never so popular as the Geneva one. During the reign of Elizabeth there were no less than one hundred and thirty distinct issues of Bibles and Testaments, an average of three a year.

It may interest our special parish to know further that the first American (English) Bible was printed at Philadelphia, by a Scotchman named Aitkin, in the year 1782; but the first Bible printed in America was in the German language, issued by Christopher Sauer, at Germantown, in 1743.

But I will not encroach any further upon biblical teachings: we will come back to our secular poets, and to that bravest and finest figure of them all, who was born upon the Avon.

## SHAKESPEARE

I HAVE tried—I will confess it now—to pique the reader's curiosity, by giving him stolen glimpses from time to time of the great dramatist, and by putting off, in chapter after chapter, any full or detailed mention of him, or of his work. Indeed, when I first entered upon these talks respecting English worthies—whether places, or writers, or sovereigns—I said to myself—when we come up with that famous Shakespeare, whom all the world knows so well, and about whom so much has been said and written—we will make our obeisance, lift our hat, and pass on to the lesser men beyond. So large a space did the great dramatist fill in the delightsome journey we were to make together, down through the pleasant country of English letters, that he seemed not so much a personality as some great British stronghold, with outworks, and with pennons flying—standing all athwart the Elizabethan Valley, down which our track was to lead us. From far away back of Chaucer, when the first Romances of King Arthur were told, when glimpses of a King Lear and a Macbeth appeared in old chronicles—this great monument

of Elizabethan times loomed high in our front; and go far as we may down the current of English letters, it will not be out of sight, but loom up grandly behind us. And now that we are fairly abreast of it, my fancy still clings to that figure of a great castle—brimful of life—with which the lesser poets of the age contrast like so many out-lying towers, that we can walk all round about, and measure, and scale, and tell of their age, and forces, and style; but this Shakespearean hulk is so vast, so wondrous, so peopled with creatures, who are real, yet unreal—that measure and scale count for nothing. We hear around it the tramp of armies and the blare of trumpets; yet these do not drown the sick voice of poor distraught Ophelia. We see the white banner of France flung to the breeze, and the English columbine nodding in clefts of the wall; we hear the ravens croak from turrets that lift above the chamber of Macbeth, and the howling of the rain-storms that drenched poor Lear; and we see Jessica at her casement, and the Jew Shylock whetting his greedy knife, and the hump-backed Richard raging in battle, and the Prince boy—apart in his dim tower—piteously questioning the jailer Hubert, who has brought "hot-irons" with him. Then there is Falstaff,

and Dame Quickly, and the pretty Juliet sighing herself away from her moonlit balcony.

These are all live people to us; we know them; and we know Hamlet, and Brutus, and Mark Antony, and the witty, coquettish Rosalind; even the poor Mariana of the moated grange. We do not see enough of this latter, to be sure, to give stereoscopic roundness; but the mere glimpse—allusion—is of such weight —has such hue of realness, that it buoys the dim figure over the literary currents and drifts of two hundred and odd years, till it gets itself planted anew in the fine lines of Tennyson;—not as an illusion only, a figment of the elder imagination chased down and poetically adopted—but as an historic actuality we have met, and so, greet with the grace and the knowingness of old acquaintanceship.

If you tell me of twenty historic names in these reigns of Elizabeth and James—names of men or women whose lives and characters you know best—I will name to you twenty out of the dramas of Shakespeare whose lives and characters you know better.

And herein lies the difference between this man Shakespeare, and most that went before him, or who have succeeded him; he has supplied real characters to count up among the

characters we know. Chaucer did indeed in that Canterbury Pilgrimage which he told us in such winning numbers, make us know by a mere touch, in some unforgettable way, all the outer aspects of the Knight, and the Squire, and the Prioress, and the shrewish Wife of Bath; but we do not see them insidedly; and as for the Una, and Gloriana, and Britomart, of the "Faërie Queene," they are phantasmic; we may admire them, but we admire them as we admire fine bird-plumes tossing airily, delightsomely—they have no flesh and blood texture: and if I were to name to you a whole catalogue of the best-drawn characters out of Jonson, and Fletcher, and Massinger, and the rest, you would hardly know them. Will you try? You may know indeed the Sir Giles Overreach of Massinger, because "A New Way to Pay Old Debts" has always a certain relish; and because Sir Giles is a dreadful type of the unnatural, selfish greed that maddens us everywhere; but do you know well—Sejanus, or Tamburlaine, or Bellisant, or Boadicea, or Bellario, or Bobadil, or Calantha? You do not even know them to bow to. And this, not alone because we are unused to read or to hear the plays in which these characters appear, but because none of them have that vital round-

ness, completeness, and individuality which makes their memory stick in the mind, when once they have shown their qualities.

We are, all of us, in the way of meeting people in respect of whom a week, or even a day of intercourse, will so fasten upon us—maybe their pungency, their alertness, or some one of their decided, fixed, fine attributes, that they thenceforth people our imagination; not obtrusively there indeed, but a look, a name, an allusion, calls back their special significance, as in a photographic blaze. Others there are, in shoals, whom we may meet, day by day, month by month, who have such washed-out color of mind, who do so take hues from all surroundings, without any strong hue of their own, that in parting from them we forget, straightway, what manner of folk they were. You cannot part so from the people Shakespeare makes you know.

### SHAKESPEARE'S YOUTH

And now what was the personality of this man, who, out of his imagination, has presented to us such a host of acquaintances? Who was he, where did he live, how did he live, and what about his father, or his children, or his family retinue?

And here we are at once confronted by the awkward fact, that we have less positive knowledge of him, and of his habits of life than of many smaller men—poets and dramatists—who belonged to his time, and who—with a pleasant egoism—let drop little tidbits of information about their personal history. But Shakespeare did not write letters that we know of; he did not prate of himself in his books; he did not entertain such quarrels with brother authors as provoked reckless exposure of the family "wash." Of Greene, of Nashe, of Dekker, of Jonson, of Beaumont and Fletcher, we have personal particulars about their modes of living, their associates, their dress even, which we seek for vainly in connection with Shakespeare. This is largely due, doubtless—aside from the pleasant egoism at which I have hinted—to the circumstance that most of these were university men, and had very many acquaintances among those of culture who kept partial record of their old associates. But no school associate of Shakespeare ever kept track of *him;* he ran out of sight of them all.

He did study, however, in his young days, at that old town of Stratford, where he was born—his father being fairly placed there among the honest tradespeople who lived

around. The ancient timber-and-plaster shop is still standing in Henley Street, where his father served his customers—whether in wool, meats, or gloves—and in the upper front chamber of which Shakespeare first saw the light. Forty odd years ago, when I first visited it, the butcher's fixtures were not wholly taken down which had served some descendant of the family—in the female line[1]—toward the close of the eighteenth century, for the cutting of meats. Into what Pimlico order it may be put to-day, under the hands of the Shakespeare Society, I do not know; but it is understood that its most characteristic features are religiously guarded; and house, and town, and church are all worthy of a visit. The town does not lie, indeed, on either of those great thoroughfares which Americans are wont to take on their quick rush from Liverpool to

[1]The allusion is to the Harts, whose ancestress was Shakespeare's sister Joan. A monumental record in Trinity Church, Stratford, reads thus: "In memory of Thomas Hart, who was the fifth descendant in a direct line from Joan, eldest daughter of John Shakespeare. He died May 23, 1793."

A son of the above Thomas Hart "followed the business of a butcher at Stratford, where he was living in 1794." Still another Thomas Hart (eighth in descent from Joan) is said to be now living in Australia—the only male representative of that branch of the family.

London, and the Continent; but it is easily approachable on the north from Warwick, in whose immediate vicinity are Kenilworth and Guy's Cliff; and from the south through Oxford, whose scores of storied towers and turrets beguile the student traveller. The country around Stratford has not, indeed, the varied picturesqueness of Derbyshire or of Devon; but it has in full the quiet rural charm that belongs to so many townships of Middle-England;—hawthorn hedges, smooth roads, embowered side lanes, great swells of greensward where sheep are quietly feeding; clumps of gray old trees, with rookeries planted in them, and tall chimneys of country houses lifting over them and puffing out little wavelets of blue smoke; meadows with cattle browsing on them; wayside stiles; a river and canals, slumberous in their tides, with barges of coal and lumber swaying with the idle currents that swish among the sedges at the banks.

On the north, toward Warwick, are the Welcombe hills, here and there tufted with great trees, which may have mingled their boughs, in some early time, with the skirts of the forest of Arden; and from these heights, looking southwest, one can see the packed gray and red roofs of the town, the lines of lime-trees,

the elms and the willows of the river's margin, out of which rises the dainty steeple of Stratford church; while beyond, the eye leaps over the hazy hollows of the Red-horse valley, and lights upon the blue rim of hills in Gloucestershire, known as the Cotswolds (which have given name to one of the famous breeds of English sheep). More to the left, and nearer to a south line of view, crops up Edgehill (near to Pilot-Marston), an historic battle-field—wherefrom Shakespeare, on his way to London may have looked back—on spire, and alder copse, and river—with more or less of yearning. To the right, again, and more westerly than before, and on the hither side of the Red-horse valley and plain, one can catch sight of the rounded thickets of elms and of orcharding where nestles the hamlet of Shottery. Thence Shakespeare brought away his bride, Anne Hathaway, she being well toward the thirties, and he at that date a prankish young fellow not yet nineteen. What means he may have had of supporting a family at this time, we cannot now say; nor could his father-in-law tell then; on which score there was—as certain traditions run—some vain demurral. He may have been associated with his father in trade, whether as wool-dealer or glover; doubtless was; doubtless, too, had abandoned all school-

ing; doubtless was at all the wakes, and May festivals, and entertainments of strolling players, and had many a bout of heavy ale-drinking. There are stories too—of lesser authenticity—that he was over-familiar with the game in the near Park of Charlecote, whereby he came to ugly issue with its owner. We shall probably never know the truth about these stories. Charlecote House is still standing, a few miles out of the town (northeasterly), and its delightful park, and picturesque mossy walls—dappled with patches of shadow and with ivy leaves—look charmingly innocent of any harm their master could have done to William Shakespeare; but certain it is that the neighborhood grew too warm for him; and that he set off one day (being then about twenty-three years old) for London, to seek his fortune.

### FAMILY RELATIONS

His wife and three children[1] stayed behind. In fact—and it may as well be said here—they always stayed behind. It does not appear that

[1] Susanna, the eldest, baptized 1583; Hamnet and Judith (twins), baptized 1585. In 1596 Hamnet died; in 1607 Susanna married Dr. Hall; and in 1616 (year of Shakespeare's death) Judith married Quiney, vintner.

throughout the twenty or more succeeding years, during which Shakespeare was mostly in London, that either wife or child was ever domiciled with him there for ever so little time. Indeed, for the nine years immediately following Shakespeare's departure from Stratford, tráces of his special whereabouts are very dim; we know that rising from humblest work in connection with companies of players, he was blazing a great and most noticeable path for himself; but whether through those nine years he was tied to the shadow of London houses, or was booked for up-country expeditions, or (as some reckon) made brief continental journeyings, we cannot surely tell. In 1596, however, on an occasion of his son Hamnet's death, he appears in Stratford again, in the prime of his powers then, a well-to-do man (buying New Place the year following), his London fame very likely blazoning his path amid old townspeople—grieving over his lost boy, whom he can have seen but little—perhaps putting some of the color of his private sorrow upon the palette where he was then mingling the tints for his play of "Romeo and Juliet."

"Oh, my love,
Death that hath sucked the honey of thy breath

Hath had no power yet upon thy beauty.
Thou art not conquered; Beauty's ensign yet
Is crimson in thy lips, and in thy cheeks,
And death's pale flag is not advanced there.
Why art thou yet so fair?"

His two daughters lived to maturity—both marrying; the favorite and elder daughter, Susanna, becoming the wife of Dr. Hall, a well-established physician in Stratford, who attended the poet in his last illness, and who became his executor. Shakespeare was—so far as known—watchful and tender of his children's interests: nor is there positive evidence that he was otherwise to his wife, save such inferences as may be drawn from the tenor of some of his sonnets, and from those long London absences, over which it does not appear that either party greatly repined. Long absences are not *prima-facie* evidence of a lack of domestic harmonies; do indeed often promote them in a limited degree; and at worst, may possibly show only a sagacious disposition to give pleasant noiselessness to bickerings that would be inevitable.

It is further to be borne in mind, in partial vindication of Shakespeare's marital loyalty, that this period of long exile from the family roof entailed not only absence from his wife,

but also from father and mother—both of whom were living down to a date long subsequent,[1] and with whom—specially the mother—most affectionate relations are undoubted. A disloyalty that would have made him coy of wifely visitings could hardly harden him to filial duties, while the phlegmatic indifference of a very busy London man, which made him chary of home visitings, would go far to explain the seeming family estrangement.

But we must not, and cannot reckon the Stratford poet as a paragon of all the virtues; his long London absences, for cause or for want of cause—or both—may have given many twinges of pain to his own mother (of Arden blood), and to the mother of his children. Yet after the date of his boy's death, up to the time of his final return to Stratford there are evidences of very frequent home visits, and of large interest in what concerned his family and towns-people.

His journeyings to and fro, probably on horseback, may have taken him by way of Edgehill, and into Banbury (of "Banbury-Cross" buns); or, more likely, he would have followed the valley of the Stour by Shipston, and thence up the hills to Chipping-Norton,

[1] His father died in 1601, and his mother in 1608.

and skirting Whichwood Forest, which still darkens a twelve-mile stretch of land upon the right, and so by Ditchley and the great Woodstock Park, into Oxford. I recall these names and the succession of scenes the more distinctly, for the reason that some forty years ago I went over the whole stretch of road from Windsor to Stratford on foot, staying the nights at wayside inns, and lunching at little, mossy hostelries, some of which the poet may possibly have known, and looking out wonderingly and reverently for glimpses of wood, or field, or flood, that may have caught the embalmment of his verse. It was worth getting up betimes to verify such lines as these:—

"Full many a glorious morning have I seen
Kissing with golden face the meadows green,
Gilding pale streams with heavenly alchemy;"

or those others, telling how the gentle day

"Dapples the drowsy East with spots of gray."

Again, there was delightful outlook for

"——a bank whereon the wild thyme blows
Where oxlips and the nodding violet grows;"

or, perhaps it was the

"Summer's green, all girded up in sheaves"

that caught the eye; or, yet again, the picturesque hedgerows, which,

> "Like prisoners overgrown with hair
> Put forth disordered twigs;"

and these flanked by some

> "——even mead, which erst brought sweetly forth
> The freckled cowslip, burnet, and green clover."

What a wondrous light upon all the landscape, along all the courses of his country journeyings! Nor can I forbear to tell how such illumination once made gay for me all the long foot-tramp from Chipping-Norton to Stratford —past Long Compton, and past Shipston (with lunch at the "Royal George")—past Atherton Church, and thence along the lovely Stour banks, and some weary miles of grassy level, till the spire of Trinity rose shimmering in the late sunlight; afterward copses of elms, and willows clearly distinguishable, and throwing afternoon shadows on the silvery stretch of the Avon; then came sight of lazy boats, and of Clopton Bridge, over which I strolled foot-weary, into streets growing dim in the twilight; coming thus, by a traveller's chance, into the court of the Red-Horse Tavern, and into

its little back-parlor, where after dinner one was served by the gracious hostess with a copy of Irving's "Sketch Book" (its Stratford chapter all tattered and thumb-worn). In short, I had the rare good fortune to stumble upon the very inn where Geoffrey Crayon was quartered twenty odd years before, and was occupying, for the nonce, the very parlor where he had thrust his feet into slippers, made a sceptre of the poker, and enjoyed the royalties of "mine inn."

## SHAKESPEARE IN LONDON

But how fares our runaway Shakespeare in London? What is he to do there? We do not positively know that he had a solitary acquaintance established in the city; certainly not one of a high and helping position. He was not introduced, as Spenser had been, by Sir Philip Sidney and by Raleigh to the favor of the Queen. He had no literary backing of the colleges, or of degrees, or of learned associates; nay, not being so high placed, or so well placed, but that his townsmen of most respectability shook their heads at mention of him.

But he has heard the strolling players; perhaps has journeyed up in their trail; he has

read broadsides, very likely, from London; we may be sure that he has tried his hand at verses, too, in those days when he went courting to the Hathaway cottage. So he drifts to the theatres, of which there were three at least established, when he first trudged along the Strand toward Blackfriars. He gets somewhat to do in connection with them; precisely what that is, we do not know. But he comes presently to be enrolled as player, taking old men's parts that demand feeling and dignity. We know, too, that he takes to the work of mending plays, and splicing good parts together. Sneered at very likely, by the young fellows from the universities who are doing the same thing, and may be, writing plays of their own; but lacking Shakespeare's instinct as to what will take hold of the popular appetite, or rather —let us say—what will touch the human heart.

There are poems, too, that he writes early in this town life of his, dedicated to that Earl of Southampton[1] of whom I have already

[1] The dedication of *Venus and Adonis* (and subsequently of *Tarquin and Lucrece*) to the Earl of Southampton is undoubted; nor are intimate friendly relations doubted; but the further supposition—long accredited—that the major part of the Sonnets were addressed to the same Earl—is now generally abandoned —entirely so by the new Shakespearean scholars. Wil-

spoken, and into whose good graces he has somehow fallen. But the Earl is eight or ten years his junior, a mere boy in fact, just from Cambridge, strangely attracted by this high-browed, blue-eyed, sandy-haired young fellow from Stratford, who has shown such keenness and wondrous insight.

Would you hear a little bit of what he wrote in what he calls the "first heir of my invention?" It is wonderfully descriptive of a poor hare who is hunted by hounds; which he had surely seen over and again on the Oxfordshire or Cotswold downs:

"Sometimes he runs among a flock of sheep,
To make the cunning hounds mistake their smell,
And sometime sorteth with a herd of deer;
Danger deviseth shifts; wit waits on fear.

"For there, his smell, with others being mingled,
The hot-scent snuffing hounds are driven to doubt,

liam Herbert (Earl of Pembroke)—to whom is dedicated the 1623 folio—is counted by many the "begetter" of these, and the rival of the poet in loves of the "dark-eyed" frail one, whose identity has so provoked inquiry.

A late theory favors a Miss Fitton, of whom a descendant, the Rev. Fred. Fitton, has latterly made himself advocate. See *Athenæum* for February 20, 1886.

Ceasing their clamorous cry, till they have singled
With much ado, the cold fault clearly out;
Then do they spend their mouths: Echo replies
As if another chase were in the skies.

"By this poor Wat, far off upon a hill,
Stands on his hinder legs with listening fear,
To hearken if his foes pursue him still;
Anon, their loud alarums he doth hear;
And now his grief may be comparéd well
To one sore-sick, that hears the passing bell."

It must have been close upon this that his first play was written and played, though not published until some years after. It may have been "Love's Labor's Lost," it may have been the "Two Gentlemen of Verona;" no matter what: I shall not enter into the question of probable succession of his plays, as to which critics will very likely be never wholly agreed.[1] It is enough that he wrote them; the merry

[1] A very good exhibit of best opinions on such points may be found briefly summarized in Stopford Brooke's little *Primer of English Literature;* see also Mr. Fleay's recent *Chronical History of Shakespeare;* and fuller discussion (though somewhat antiquated) in Dr. Drake's interesting discussion of *Shakespeare and his Times.* I name this book, not as wholly authoritative, or comparable with the mass of newer criticism which has been

ones when his heart was light, and the tragic ones when grief lay heavily upon him. And yet this is only partially true; he had such amazing power of subordinating his feeling to his thought.

I wonder how much of his own hopes and possible foretaste he did put into the opening lines of what, by most perhaps, is reckoned his first play:—

"Let Fame, that all hunt after in their lives,
Live registered upon our brazen tombs,
And then grace us in the disgrace of Death;
When, spite of cormorant-devouring Time,
The endeavor of this present breath may buy
That honor, which shall bate his scythe's keen edge
And make us heirs of all Eternity!"

## WORK AND REPUTATION

And what was thought of him in those first days? Not overmuch; none looked upon him

developed under the auspices of the different Shakespeare societies, but as massing together a great budget of information from contemporaneous authors and full of entertaining reading. In America, the Shakespearean labors of Hudson, Grant White, and Dr. Rolfe are to be noted; and also—with larger emphasis—the beginnings of the monumental work of Mr. Furniss.

as largely overtopping his compeers of that day. His *Venus and Adonis*[1] was widely and admiringly known: so was his *Lucrece;* but Marlowe's "sound and fury" in "Tamburlaine" would have very possibly drawn twice the house of "Love's Labor's Lost."

He had no coterie behind him; he was hail-fellow with Jonson; probably knew Peele and Marlowe well; undoubtedly knew Drayton; he went to the Falcon and the Mermaid; but there is, I believe, no certain evidence that he ever saw much of Raleigh, or of Spenser, who was living some years after he came to London. It is doubtful, indeed, if the poet of the *Faery Queene* knew him at all. Sidney he probably never saw; nor did he ever go, so far as appears, to dine with the great Francis Bacon, as Jonson without doubt sometimes did, or with Burleigh, or with Cecil.

His lack of precise learning may have made him inapt for encounter with school-men. But he had a faculty of apprehension that transcended mere scholastic learning—apprehending everywhere, in places where studious ones were blind. I can imagine that Oxford men—just up in town or those who had written theses for

[1] Seven editions of this poem were published between 1593 and 1602.

university purposes, would sneer at such show of learning as he made;—call it cheap erudition—call it result of cramming—as many university men do nowadays when they find a layman and outsider hitting anything that respects learning in the eye. But, ah, what a gift of cramming! What a gift of apprehension! What a swift march over the hedges that cramp schools! What a flight, where other men walked, and were dazed and discomfited by this unheard-of progress into the ways of knowledge and of wisdom!

Again, these Shakespeare plays do sometimes show crude things, vulgar things, coarse things —things we want to skip and do skip—things that make us wonder if he ever wrote them; perhaps some which in the mendings and tinkerings of those and later days have no business there; and yet he was capable of saying coarse things; he did have a shrewd eye for the appetites of the groundlings; he did look on all sides, and into all depths of the moral Cosmos he was rounding out; and even his commonest utterances, have, after all, a certain harmony, though in lowest key, with the general drift. He is not always, as some of his dramatic compeers were, on tragic stilts. He is never under strain to float high.

Then, too, like Chaucer—his noblest twin-fellow of English poesy—he steals, plagiarizes, takes tales of passion, and love, and wreck, wherever in human history he can find them, to work into his purposes. But even the authors could scarce recognize the thefts in either case, so glorified are they by the changes they undergo under these wonder-making hands.

As with story, so it is with sentiment. This he steals out of men's brains and hearts by wholesale. What smallest poet, whether in print or talk, could have failed to speak of man's journey to his last home? Shakespeare talks of

"That undiscovered country, from whose bourn
no traveller returns,"

and the sentiment is so imaged, and carries such a trail of agreeing and caressing thoughts, that it supplants all kindred speech.

"This life," says Shakespeare, "is but a stage;" and the commentators can point you out scores of like similes in older writers—Erasmus among the rest, whose utterance seems almost duplicated; duplicated, indeed, but with a tender music, and a point, and a breadth, that makes all previous related similes forgotten. Such utterances grow out of instincts

common to us all; but this man, in whom the common instinct is a masterful alembic, fuses all old teachings, and white-hot they run out of the crucible of his soul in such beauteous shapes that they are sought for and gloried in forever after. Many a Hamlet has soliloquized—you and I perhaps; but never a Hamlet in such a way as did Shakespeare's; so crisp—so full—so suggestive—so marrowy—so keen—so poignant—so enthralling.

No, no; this man did not go about in quest of newnesses; only little geniuses do that; but the great genius goes along every commonest roadside, looking on every commonest sight of tree or flower, of bud, of death, of birth, of flight, of labor, of song; leads in old tracks; deals in old truths, but with such illuminating power that they all come home to men's souls with new penetrative force and new life in them. He catches by intuition your commonest thought, and my commonest thought, and puts them into new and glorified shape.

### HIS THRIFT AND CLOSING YEARS

Again, this Shakespeare of ours, singing among the stars, is a shrewd, thrifty man; he

comes to have an interest in all those shillings and sixpences that go into the till of the Globe Theatre; he makes money. Where he lived in London,[1] we do not definitely know; at one time, it is believed, on the Southwark side, near to the old Bear-garden,[2] but never ostentatiously; very likely sharing chambers with his brother Edmond, who was much time an actor there;[3] he buys a house and haberdasher's shop somewhere near Blackfriars; and he had previously bought, with his savings—even before Queen Elizabeth was dead—a great house in Stratford. This he afterwards equips by purchase of outlying lands—a hundred acres at one time, and twenty and more at another.

[1] The *Nation* (N. Y.), of March 7, 1884, has this:

"In an indenture between the R^t Hon. Sir Rich^d Saltonstall, Knt., Lord Mayor of London, and 2 others, Commissioners of her Majesty (fortieth yr of Queen Elizabeth), and the parties deputed to collect the first of these subsidies granted by Parliament the yr preceding—(bearing date Oct. 1598), for the *rate of S^t Helen's Parish*, Bishopsgate ward—the name of *Wm. Shakespeare* is found as liable, with others, to that rate."

This, if it be indeed our William who is named, would serve to show residence in "S^t Helen's Parish"—in which is the venerable Crosby Hall.

[2] See Halliwell-Phillips (vol. i., p. 130; 7th ed.).

[3] Edmond Shakespeare was buried in St. Saviour's in 1607.

He has never forgotten and never forgotten to love, country sights and sounds. These journeyings to and fro along the Oxford and Uxbridge road (on horseback probably), from which he can see sheer over hedges, and note every fieldfare, every lark rising to its morning carol, every gleam of brook, have kept alive his old fondnesses, and he counts surely on a return to these scenes in his great New Place of Stratford. He does break away for that Stratford cover, while the game of life seems still at its best promise; while Hamlet is still comparatively a new man upon the boards; does settle himself in that country home, to gather his pippins, to pet his dogs, to wander at will upon greensward that is his own.

I wish we had record of only one of his days in that retirement. I wish we could find even a two-page letter which he may have written to Ben Jonson, in London, telling how his time passed; but there is nothing—positively nothing. We do not know how, or by what exposure or neglect his last illness came upon him and carried him to his final home, only two years or so after his return to Stratford. Even that Dr. Hall, who had married his favorite daughter, and who attended him, and who published a medical book containing accounts of

a thousand and more cases which he thought of consequence for the world to know about, has no word to say concerning this grandest patient that his eye ever fell upon.

He died at the age of fifty-three. No descendant of his daughter Susanna is alive; no descendant of his daughter Judith is alive.[1] The great new home which he had built up in Stratford is torn down; scarce a vestige of it remains. The famous mulberry-tree he planted upon that greensward, where, in after years, Garrick and the rest held high commemorative festival, is gone, root and branch.

[1] I append table from French's *Shakespeareana Genealogica:*

Wm. Shakespeare, b. Apr. 23, 1564; m. Anne Hathaway, b. 1556, dau. of Richd. and Joan Hathaway, of Shottery.

- Susanna, b. May, 1583, d. July 2, 1649; m. Jno. Hall, physician, b. 1575.
  - Elizabeth Hall, b. 1608; d. s. p. 1669.
- Hamnet, twin with Judith, bapt. Feb. 2, 1585, d. s. p. 1596.
- Judith, bapt. Feb. 2, 1585, d. 1661; m. Thos. Quiney.
  - Shakespeare Quiney b. 1616.
  - Richd. Quiney b. 1618.
  - Thos. Quiney b. 1669.

Elizabeth Hall was twice married: 1st to Thomas Nash—2d to Jno. Bernard (knighted by Charles II.), and had no issue by either marriage.

Of the Quiney children, above named, the 1st (Shakespeare), d. in infancy; the 2d (Richard Quiney), d. without issue, in 1638; the 3d (Thomas Quiney), died the same year, 1638—also without issue.

Shakespeare—an old county guide-book tells us stolidly—is a name unknown in that region. Unknown! Every leaf of every tree whispers it; every soaring skylark makes a carol of it; and the memory of it flows out thence—as flows the Stratford river—down through all the green valley of the Avon, down through all the green valley of the Severn, and so on, out to farthest seas, whose "multitudinous waves" carry it to every shore.

## CHAPTER III

We were venturing upon almost sacred ground when—in our last chapter—we had something to say of the so-called King James's Bible; of how it came to bear that name; of those men who were concerned in its translation, and of certain literary qualities belonging to it, which—however excellent other and possible future Bibles may be—will be pretty sure to keep it alive for a very long time to come. Next, I spoke of that king of the dramatists who was born at Stratford. We followed him up to London; tracked him awhile there; talked of a few familiar aspects of his life and character; spared you the recital of a world of things—conjectural or eulogistic—which might be said of him; and finally saw him go back to his old home upon the Avon, to play the retired gentleman—last of all his plays—and to die.

This made a great coupling of topics for one chapter—Shakespeare and the English Bible!

No two titles in our whole range of talks can or should so interest those who are alive to the felicities of English forms of speech, and who are eager to compass and enjoy its largest and keenest and simplest forces of phrase. No other vocabulary of words, and no other exemplar of the aptitudes of language, than can be found in Shakespeare and in the English Bible are needed by those who would equip their English speech for its widest reach, and with its subtlest or sharpest powers. Out of those twin treasuries the student may dredge all the words he wants, and all the turns of expression that will be helpful, in the writing of a two-page letter or in the unfolding of an epic. Other books may make needful reservoir of facts, or record of theories, or of literary experimentation; but these twain furnish sufficient lingual armament for all new conquests in letters.

We find ourselves to-day amid a great hurly-burly of dramatists, poets, prose-writers, among whom we have to pick our way—making a descriptive dash at some few of them—seeing the old pedant of a king growing more slipshod and more shaky, till at last he yields the throne to that unfortunate son of his, Charles I., in whose time we shall find some new singing-

birds in the fields of British poesy, and birds of a different strain.

### WEBSTER, FORD, AND OTHERS

All those lesser dramatists going immediately before Shakespeare, and coming immediately after or with him, may be counted in literary significance only as the trail to that grander figure which swung so high in the Elizabethan heavens; many a one among the lesser men has written something which has the true poetic ring in it, and is to be treasured; but ring however loudly it may, and however musically it may, it will very likely have a larger and richer echo somewhere in Shakespeare.

Among the names of those contemporaries whose names are sure of long survival may be mentioned John Webster; a Londoner in all probability; working at plays early in the seventeenth century; his name appearing on various title-pages up to 1624 certainly—one time as "merchant tailor;" and there are other intimations that he may have held some church "clerkship;" but we know positively very little of him. Throughout the eighteenth century his name and fame[1] had slipped away from

[1] The extreme limits of his life and career would probably lie between 1575 and 1635; *Strahan's Biographical Dictionary* of the last century makes no men-

people's knowledge; somewhere about the year 1800 Charles Lamb gave forth his mellow piping of the dramatist's deservings; a quarter of a century later Mr. Dyce [1] wrote and published what was virtually a resurrection work for Webster; and in our time the swift-spoken Swinburne transcends all the old conventionalities of encyclopædic writing in declaring this dramatist to be "hardly excelled for unflagging energy of impression and of pathos in all the poetic literature of the world."

Webster was not a jocund man; he seems to have taken life in a hard way; he swears at fate. Humane and pathetic touches there may be in his plays; but he has a dolorous way of putting all the humanities to simmer in a great broth of crime. At least this may not be unfairly said of his chiefest works, and those by which he is best known—the "Vittoria Corombona" and the "Duchess of Malfi." There are blood-curdling scenes in them through which one is led by a guidance that is as strenuous as it is fascinating. The drapery is in awful keeping with the trend of the story; the easy murders hardly appal one, and the breezes that fan

tion of him; nor does the *Biographie Universelle* of as early date.

[1] Works of John Webster; with some account of the Author, and Notes, by Rev. A. Dyce (original edition, 1830).

the air seem to come from the flutter of bat-like, leaden wings, hiding the blue. There are, indeed, wondrous flashes of dramatic power; by whiles, too, there are refreshing openings-out to the light or sinlessness of common day—a lifting of thought and consciousness up from the great welter of crime and crime's entanglements; but there is little brightness, sparse sunshine, rare panoply of green or blooming things; even the flowers are put to sad offices, and

"do cover
The friendless bodies of unburied men."

When a man's flower culture gets reduced to such narrow margin as this it does not carry exhilarating odors with it.

John Ford[1] was another name much coupled in those and succeeding days with that of Webster; he was indeed associated with him in some of his work, as also with Dekker. He was a man of Devonshire birth, of good family; —a little over-boastful of being above any "want for money;" showing traces, indeed, of coarse arrogance, and swaying dramatically into coarse brutalities. He, too, was borne

[1] Ford, b. about 1586, and d. 1640. Works edited by Gifford; revised, with Dyce's notes, 1869.

down by enslavement to the red splendors of crime; his very titles carry such foretaste of foulness we do not name them. There are bloody horrors and moral ones. Few read him for love. Murder makes room for incest, and incest sharpens knives for murder. Animal passions run riot; the riot is often splendid, but never—to my mind—making head in such grand dramatic utterance as crowns the gory numbers of Webster. There are strong passages, indeed, gleaming out of the red riotings like blades of steel; now and then some fine touch of pathos—of quiet contemplative brooding—lying amid the fiery wrack, like a violet on banks drenched with turbid floods; but they are rare, and do not compensate—at least do not compensate me—for the wadings through bloody, foul quagmires to reach them.

Marston—another John[1]—if not up to the tragic level of the two last named, had various talent; wrote satires, parodies; his *Image of Pygmalion* had the honor of being publicly burned; he wrought with Jonson on *Eastward Hoe!* won the piping praises of Charles Lamb

[1] John Marston, b. 1565 (?); d. about 1634; believed to have been a Shropshire man, and one while of Brasenose College, Oxford.

in our century, also of Hazlitt, and the eulogies of later and lesser critics. But he is coarse, unequal, little read now. I steal a piquant bit of his satire on metaphysic study from *What you Will;* it reminds of the frolic moods of Browning:

"I wasted lamp oil, bated my flesh,
Shrunk up my veins, and still my spaniel slept;
And still I held converse with Zabarell,
Aquinas, Scotus, and the musty saws
Of antique Donate:—still my spaniel slept.
Still on went I: first, *an sit anima,*
Then, an' 't were mortal. O hold, hold!
At that they are at brain buffets, fell by the ears
Amain [pell-mell] together—still my spaniel slept.
Then, whether 't were corporeal, local, fixed,
*Ex traduce;* but whether 't had free will
Or no, hot philosophers
Stood banding factions, all so strongly propped,
I staggered, knew not which was firmer part;
But thought, quoted, read, observed, and pried,
Stuffed noting books,—and still my spaniel slept.
At length he waked, and yawned, and by yon sky,
For aught I know, he knew as much as I."

## MASSINGER, BEAUMONT, AND FLETCHER

Some dozen or more existing plays are attributed to Philip Massinger,[1] and he was doubtless the author of many others now unknown save by name. Of Wiltshire birth, his father had been dependant, or *protégé* of the Pembroke family, and the Christian name of Philip very likely kept alive the paternal reverence for the great Philip Sidney. Though Massinger was an industrious writer, and was well accredited in his time, it is certain that he had many hard struggles, and passed through many a pinching day; and at the last it would appear that he found burial, only as an outsider and stranger, in that old church of St. Saviours, near to London Bridge, where we found John Gower laid to rest with his books for pillow. If Massinger did not lift his lines into such gleams of tragic intensity as we spoke of in Webster and in Ford, he gave good, workmanlike finish to his dramas; and for bloody apparelling of his plots, I think there are murderous zealots, in his Sforza[2] story at least, who could

[1] Philip Massinger, b. 1584; d. 1640. His works were edited by Gifford, and on this edition is based the later one of Col. Cunningham (1870).

[2] "The Duke of Milan."

fairly have clashed swords with the assassins of "Vittoria Corombona." It is a large honor to Massinger that of all the dramas I have named—outside some few of Shakespeare's—no one is so well known to modern play-goers as the "New Way to Pay Old Debts." The character of Sir Giles Overreach does not lose its terrible significance. In our times, as in the old times,

"He frights men out of their estates,
And breaks through all law-nets—made to curb ill men—
As they were cobwebs."

When Massinger died tradition says that he was thrust into the same grave which had been opened shortly before for John Fletcher; if not joined there, these two had certainly been fellows in literary work; and there are those who think that the name of Massinger should have recognition in that great dramatic copartnery under style of Beaumont and Fletcher.[1] Certain it is that other writers had share in the work; among them—in at least one instance (that of "Two Noble Kinsmen")—the fine hand of Shakespeare.

[1] John Fletcher, b. 1579; d. 1625. Francis Beaumont, son of Sir Francis Beaumont, b. (probably) 1585; d. 1616.

But whatever helping touches or of outside journey-work may have been contributed to that mass of plays which bears name of Beaumont and Fletcher, it is certain that they hold of right that brilliant reputation for deft and lively and winning dramatic work which put their popularity before Jonson's, if not before Shakespeare's. The coupling together of this pair of authors at their work has the air of romance; both were well born; Fletcher, son of a bishop; Beaumont, son of Sir Francis Beaumont, of Grace-Dieu, (not far away from Ashby-de-la-Zouch); both were university men, and though differing in age by eight or nine years, yet coming—very likely through the good offices of Ben Jonson—to that sharing of home and work and wardrobe which the old gossip Aubrey[1] had delighted in picturing. They wrought charmingly together, and with such a nice welding of jointures, that literary craftsmen, of whatever astuteness, are

[1] Aubrey, who died in 1697, and who is often cited, was an antiquary—not always to be relied upon—an Oxford man, friend of Thomas Hobbes, was heir to sundry country estates, which, through defective titles, involved him in suits, that brought him to grief. He was a diligent collector of "whim-whams"—very credulous; supplied Anthony à Wood (1632–1695) with much of his questionable material; and kept up friendly relations with a great many cultivated and literary people.

puzzled to say where the joinings lie. In agreement, however, with opinions of best critics, it may be said that Beaumont (the younger, who died nine years before his mate) was possessed of the deeper poetic fervors, while Fletcher was wider in fertilities and larger in affluence of diction.

The dramatic horrors of Ford and Webster are softened in the lines of these later playwrights. These are debonair; they are lively; they are jocund; they tell stories that have a beginning and an end; they pique attention; there are delicacies, too, and—it must be said—a good many indelicacies; there are light-virtued women, and marital infelicities get an easy ripening toward the over-ripeness and rottenness that is to come in Restoration times. These twain were handsome fellows, by Aubrey's and all other accounts; Beaumont most noticeably so; and Fletcher—brightly swarthy, red-haired, full-blooded—dying a bachelor and of the plague, down in the time of Charles I., and thrust hastily into the grave at St. Saviours, where Massinger presently followed him.

I must give at least one taste of the dramatic manner for which both of these men were sponsors. It is from the well-known play

of "Philaster" that I quote, where Euphrasia tells of the tender discovery of what stirred her heart:—

"My father oft would speak
Your worth and virtue: And as I did grow
More and more apprehensive, I did thirst
To see the man so praised; but yet all this
Was but a maiden longing, to be lost
As soon as found; till, sitting in my window
Printing my thoughts in lawn, I saw a god
I thought (but it was you) enter our gates.
My blood flew out, and back again as fast
As I had puffed it forth and sucked it in
Like breath. Then was I called away in haste
To entertain you. Never was a man
Heaved from a sheep-cote to a sceptre, raised
So high in thoughts as I:
I did hear you talk
Far above singing! After you were gone,
I grew acquainted with my heart, and searched
What stirred it so. Alas, I found it Love!"

Nothing better in its way can be found in all their plays. One mentioning word, however, should be given to those delightful lyrical aptitudes, by virtue of which the blithe and easy metric felicities of Elizabethan days were overlaid in tendrils of song upon the Carolan times. I wish, too, that I had space for excerpts from

that jolly pastoral of *The Faithful Shepherdess* —bewildering in its easy gaieties, and its cumulated classicisms—and which lends somewhat of its deft caroling, and of its arch conceits to the later music of Milton's "Comus." Another foretaste of Milton comes to us in these words of Fletcher:—

"Hence, all you vain delights,
As short as are the nights
Wherein you spend your folly!
There 's nought in this life, sweet,
If man were wise to see 't,
But only melancholy,
O sweetest melancholy!
Welcome folded arms and fixèd eyes,
A sigh that piercing mortifies,
A look that 's fastened to the ground,
A tongue chain'd up without a sound!
Fountain heads and pathless groves,
Places which pale passion loves!
Moonlight walks, when all the fowls
Are warmly hous'd save bats and owls!
A midnight bell, a parting groan,
These are the sounds we feed upon;
Then stretch our bones in a still gloomy valley;
Nothing 's so dainty sweet as lovely melancholy."[1]

[1] From the "Nice Valour or the Passionate Madman." By Seward this comedy is ascribed to Beaumont.

## KING JAMES AND FAMILY

MEANWHILE, how are London and England getting on with their ram-shackle dotard of a King? Not well; not proudly. Englishmen were not as boastful of being Englishmen as in the days when the virgin Elizabeth queened it, and shattered the Spanish Armada, and made her will and England's power respected everywhere. James, indeed, had a son, Prince Henry, who promised far better things for England, and for the Stuart name, than his pedant of a father.

This son was a friend of Raleigh's (would, maybe have saved that great man from the scaffold, if he had lived), a friend, too, of all the high-minded, far-seeing ones who best represented Elizabethan enterprise; but he died, poor fellow, at nineteen, leaving the heirship to that Charles I. whose dismal history you know. James had also a daughter —Elizabeth—a high-spirited maiden, who, amid brilliant fêtes made in her honor, married that Frederic, Elector Palatine, who received his bride in the magnificent old castle, you will remember, at Heidelberg. There they show still the great gateway of the Princess Elizabeth, clad in ivy, and the Elizabeth

gardens. 'T was said that her ambition and high spirit pushed the poor Elector into political complications that ruined him, and that made the once owner of that princely château an outcast, and almost a beggar. The King, too, by his vanities, his indifference, and cowardice, helped largely the discomfiture of this branch of his family, as he did by his wretched bringing up of Charles pave the way for that monarch's march into the gulf of ruin.

In foreign politics this weak king coquetted in a childish way—sometimes with the Catholic powers; sometimes with the Protestant powers of Middle Europe; and at home, with a ridiculous sense of his own importance, he angered the Presbyterians of Scotland and the Puritans of England by his perpetual interferences. He provoked the emigration that was planting, year by year, a New England west of the Atlantic; he harried the House of Commons into an antagonism which, by its growth and earnestness was, by and by, to upset his throne and family together. His power was the power of a blister that keeps irritating—and not like Elizabeth's—the power of a bludgeon that thwacks and makes an end.

And in losing respect this King gained no love. Courtiers could depend on his promises

as little as kingdoms. He chose his favorites for a fine coat, or a fine face, and thereafter, from sheer indolence yielded to them in everything. In personal habits, too, he grew more and more unbearable; his doublets were all dirtier; his wigs shabbier; his coarse jokes coarser; his tipsiness frequenter. A foulness grew up in the court which tempted such men as Fletcher and Massinger to fouler ways of speech, and which lured such creatures as Lady Essex to ruin. A pretty sort of King was this to preach against tobacco!

James had given up poetry-writing, in which he occasionally indulged before coming to England; yet he had poetical tastes; he enjoyed greatly many of Shakespeare's plays; Ben Jonson, too, was a pet of his, and had easy access to royalty, certainly until his quarrel with the great court architect, Inigo Jones. But, as in all else, the King's taste in poetry grew coarser as he grew older, and he showed a great liking for a certain John Taylor,[1] called "the Water-Poet," a rough, coarse creature, who sculled boats across the Thames

[1] John Taylor, b. 1580; d. 1654. Various papers and poems (so called) of his are printed in vol. ii. of Hindley's *Old Book Collector's Miscellany,* London, 1872. The Spenser Society has also printed an edition of his works, in 5 vols., 1870–78.

for hire; who made a foot-trip into Scotland in rivalry of Ben Jonson, and who wrote a *Very merry wherry Voyage from London to York*, and a *Kecksy-Winsey, or a Lerry-cum-twang*, which you will not find in your treasures of literature, but which the leering King loved to laugh over in his cups. Taylor afterward was keeper of a rollicking, Royalist tavern in Oxford, and of another in London, where he died at the age of seventy-four.

Tobacco, first introduced in Raleigh's early voyaging times, came to have a little fund of literature crystallizing about it—what with histories of its introduction and properties, and onslaughts upon it. Bobadil, the braggart, in "Every Man in his Humor," says: "I have been in the Indies (where this herbe growes), where neither myself nor a dozen gentlemen more (of my knowledge) have received the taste of any other nutriment, in the world, for the space of one and twenty weeks, but Tobacco only. Therefore it cannot be, but 't is most Divine."

There were many curious stories afloat too —taking different shapes—of the great apprehension ignorant ones felt on seeing people walking about, as first happened in these times, with smoke pouring from their mouths

and noses. In an old book called *The English Hue and Crie* (printed about 1610), it takes something like this form:

"A certain Welchman, coming newly to London, and beholding one to take Tobacco, never seeing the like before, and not knowing the manner of it, but perceiving him vent smoak so fast, and supposing his inward parts to be on fire, screamed an alarm, and dashed over him a big pot of Beer."

King James' *Counterblaste to the Use of Tobacco*, had about the same efficacy with the Welshman's beer-pot. But to show the King's method of arguing, I give one little whiff of it. Tobacco-lovers of that day alleged that it cleared the head and body of ugly rheums and distillations;

"But," says the King, "the fallacy of this argument may easily appeare, by my late preceding description of the skyey meteors. For even as the smoaky Vapors sucked up by the sunne and stay'd in the lowest and colde region of the Ayre, are there contracted into clouds, and turned into Raine, and such other watery meteors: so this nasty smoke sucked up by the Nose, and imprisoned in the cold and moist braines, is by their colde and wet faculty, turned and cast forth

againe in watery distillations, and so are you made free and purged of nothing, but *that* wherewith you wilfully burdened yourselves."

Is it any wonder people kept on smoking? He reasoned in much the same way about church matters; is it any wonder the Scotch would not have Anglicanism thrust upon them?

The King died at last (1625), aged fifty-nine, at his palace of Theobalds, a little out of London, and very famous, as I have said, for its fine gardens; and these gardens this prematurely old and shattered man did greatly love; loved perhaps more than his children. I do not think Charles mourned for him very grievously; but, of a surety there was no warrant for the half-hinted allegation of Milton's (at a later day) that the royal son was concerned in some parricidal scheme. There was, however, nowhere great mourning for James.

### A NEW KING AND SOME LITERARY SURVIVORS

The new King, his son, was a well-built young fellow of twenty-five, of fine appearance, well taught, and just on the eve of his marriage to Henrietta of France. He had a

better taste than his father, and lived a more orderly life; indeed, he was every way decorous save in an obstinate temper and in absurd notions about his kingly prerogative. He loved play-going and he loved poetry, though not so accessible as his father had been to the buffoonery of the water-poet Taylor, or the tipsy obeisance of old Ben Jonson. For Ben Jonson was still living, not yet much over fifty, though with his great bulk and reeling gait seeming nearer seventy; now, too, since Shakespeare is gone, easily at the head of all the literary workers in London; indeed, in some sense always at the head by reason of his dogged self-insistence and his braggadocio. All the street world[1] knows him, as he swaggers along the Strand to his new jolly rendezvous at the Devil Tavern, near St. Dunstan's, in Fleet Street—not far off from the Temple Church—where he and his fellows meet in the Apollo Chamber, over whose door Ben has written:

"Welcome, all who lead or follow
To the oracle of Apollo!
Here he speaks out of his pottle
On the tripos—his tower-bottle," etc.

[1] London was not over-large at this day; its population counted about 175,000.

Of all we have named hitherto among the Elizabethan poets, the only ones who would be likely to appear there in Charles I.'s time would be George Chapman, of the Homer translation; staid and very old now, with snowy hair; and Dekker—what time he was out of prison for debt; possibly, too, John Marston. Poor Ben Jonson wrote about this time his last play, which did not take either with courtiers or the public; whereupon the old grumbler was more rough than ever, and died a few years thereafter, wretchedly poor, and was put into the ground—upright, tradition says, as into a well—in Westminster Abbey. There one may walk over his name and his crown; and this is the last we shall see of him, whose swagger has belonged to three reigns.

Among other writers known to these times and who went somewhiles to these suppers at the Apollo was James Howell,[1] notable because he wrote so much; and I specially name him because he was the earliest and best type of what we should call a hack-writer; ready for anything; a shrewd salesman, too, of all

[1] James Howell, b. 1594; d. 1666. He was son of a minister in Carmarthenshire, and took his degree at Oxford in 1613.

he did write; travelling largely—having modern instincts, I think; making small capital—whether of learning or money—reach enormously. He was immensely popular, too, in his day; a Welshman by birth, and never wrote at all till past forty; but afterward he kept at it with a terrible pertinacity. He gives quaint advice about foreign travel, with some shrewdness cropping out in it. Thus of languages he says:

"Whereas, for other Tongues one may attaine to speak them to very good purpose, and get their good will at any age; the French tongue, by reason of the huge difference 'twixt their writing and speaking, will put one often into fits of despaire and passion; but the Learner must not be daunted a whit at that, but after a little intermission hee must come on more strongly, and with a pertinacity of resolution set upon her againe and againe, and woo her as one would do a coy mistress, with a kind of importunity, until he overmaster her: She will be very plyable at last."

Then he says, for improvement, it is well to have the acquaintance of some ancient nun, with whom one may talk through the grated windows—for they have all the news, and "they will entertain discourse till one be

weary, if one bestow on them now and then some small bagatells—as English Gloves, or Knives, or Ribands—and before hee go over, hee must furnish himself with such small curiosities."

The expenses of travel in that day on the Continent, he says, for a young fellow who has his "Riding and Dancing and Fencing, and Racket, and Coach-hire, with apparel and other casual charges will be about £300 per annum"—which sum (allowing for differences in moneyed values) may have been a matter of $6,000. He says with great aptness, too, that the traveller must not neglect letter-writing, which

"he should do exactly and not carelessly: For letters are the ideas and truest mirrors of the mind; they show the inside of a man and how he improveth himself."

## WOTTON AND WALTON

Another great traveller of these times—but one whose dignities would, I suspect, have kept him away from the Devil Tavern—was Sir Henry Wotton.[1] He was a man who had

[1] Of an ancient county family in Mid-Kent: b. 1568; d. 1639.

supplemented his university training by long residence abroad; who had been of service to King James (before the King had yet left Scotland) by divulging to him and defeating some purposed scheme of poisoning. Wotton was, later, English ambassador at the brilliant court of Venice, whence he wrote to the King many suggestions respecting the improvement of his garden, detailing Italian methods, and forwarding grafts and rare seedlings; he was familiar with most European courts—hobnobbed with Doges and with Kings, was a scholar of elegant and various accomplishments, and the reputed maker of that old and well-worn witticism about ambassadors—that "they were honest men, sent to lie abroad for the good of their country." He was, furthermore, himself boastful of the authorship of this prickly saying, "The itch of disputation is the scab of the church."[1] There is also a charming little poem of his—which gets place in the anthologies—addressed to that Elizabeth, Queen of Bohemia, whom we encountered as a bride at the Castle of Heidelberg, and who became the mother of the accom-

[1] In his will he suggested this epitaph to be put over his grave: *"Hic jacet hujus sententiæ primus auctor, Disputandi Pruritus Ecclesiæ Scabies."*

plished and daring Prince Rupert. Such a man as Wotton, full of anecdote, bristling with wit, familiar with courts, and one who could match phrases with James, or Charles, or Buckingham, in Latin, or French, or Italian, must have been a god-send for a dinner-party at Theobalds, or at Whitehall. To crown his graces, Walton[1] tells us that he was an excellent fisherman.

And this mention of the quiet Angler tempts me to enroll him here, a little before his time; yet he was well past thirty when James died, and must have been busy in the ordering of his draper's shop in Fleet Street when Charles I. came to power. He was of Staffordshire birth, and no millinery of the city could have driven out of his mind the pretty ruralities of his Staffordshire home, and the lovely far-off views of the Welsh hills. His first wife was grandniece of Bishop Cranmer; he was himself friend of Dr. Donne, to whom he listened from Sunday to Sunday; a second wife was sister of that Thomas Ken who came to be Bishop of Bath and Wells; so he was hemmed in by ecclesiasticisms, and loved them as he loved trout. He was warm Royalist always, and lived by old traditions

[1] Izaak Walton, b. 1593; d. 1683.

in Church and State—not easily overset by Reformers. No fine floral triumphs of any new gardeners, however accredited, could blind him to the old glories of the eglantine or of a damask rose. A good and quiet friend, a placid book, a walk under trees, made sufficient regalement for him. These, with a fishing bout (by way of exceptional entertainment), and a Sunday in a village church, with the Litany well intoned, were all in all to him. His book holds spicy place among ranks of books, as lavender keeps fresh odor among stores of linen. It is worth any man's dalliance with the fishing-craft to make him receptive to the simplicities and limpidities of Walton's *Angler*. I am tempted to say of him again, what I have said of him before in other connection:—very few fine writers of our time could make a better book on such a subject to-day, with all the added information and all the practice of the newspaper columns. What Walton wants to say, he says. You can make no mistake about his meaning; all is as lucid as the water of a spring. He does not play upon your wonderment with tropes. There is no chicane of the pen; he has some pleasant matters to tell of, and he tells of them—straight.

Another great charm about Walton is his child-like truthfulness. I think he is almost the only earnest trout-fisher (unless Sir Humphry Davy be excepted) whose report could be relied upon for the weight of a trout. I have many excellent friends—capital fishermen—whose word is good upon most concerns of life, but in this one thing they cannot be religiously confided in. I excuse it; I take off twenty per cent. from their estimates without either hesitation, anger, or reluctance.

I must not omit to mention his charming biographic sketches (rather than "lives") of Hooker, of Wotton, of Herbert, of Donne—the letterpress of all these flowing easily and limpidly as the brooks he loved to picture. He puts in very much pretty embroidery too, for which tradition or street gossip supplied him with his needs, in figure and in color; this is not always of best authenticity, it is true;[1] but who wishes to question when it is the sim-

[1] Statements about George Herbert, in the matter of the Melville controversy, are specially to be doubted. Of Ben Jonson he says: "He lived with a woman that governed him, near Westminster Abbey, and neither he nor she took much care for next week, and would be sure not to want wine; of which he usually took too much before he went to bed, if *not oftener and sooner*"—all which shows a pretty accessibility to gossip.

ple-souled and always honest Walton who is talking? And as for his great pastoral of *The Complete Angler*—to read it, in whatever season, is like plunging into country air, and sauntering through lovely country solitudes.

I name Sir Thomas Overbury[1]—who was the first, I think, to make that often-repeated joke respecting people who boasted of their ancestry, saying "they were like potatoes, with the best part below ground"—because he belonged to this period, and was a man of elegant culture and literary promise. He was poisoned in the Tower at the instance of some great people about the court of James, who feared damaging testimony of his upon a trial that was just then to come off; and this trial and poisoning business, in which (Carr) Somerset and Lady Essex were deeply concerned, made one of the greatest scandals of the scandalous court of King James. Overbury's *Characters* are the best known of his writings, but they are slight; quaint metaphors and tricksy English are in them, with a good many tiresome affectations of speech. What he said of the Dairymaid is best of all.

[1] Overbury, b. 1581; d. 1613 (poisoned in London Tower). Rimbault's *Life*, 1856; also Strahan's *Biographical Dictionary*, 1784.

## GEORGE HERBERT

THIS is a name which will be more familiar to the reader, and if he has never encountered the little olive-green, gilt-edged budget of Herbert's[1] poems, he can hardly have failed to have met, on some page of the anthologies, such excerpt as this about Virtue:

"Sweet day, so cool, so calm, so bright,
The bridal of the earth and sky,
The dew shall weep thy fall to-night;
For thou must die.

"Sweet rose, whose hue, angry and brave,
Bids the rash gazer wipe his eye,
Thy root is ever in its grave,
And thou must die.

"Only a sweet and virtuous soul,
Like season'd timber, never gives;
But though the whole world turn to coal,
Then chiefly lives."

[1] George Herbert, b. 1593; d. 1633. The edition of his poems referred to is that of Bell & Daldy, London, 1861. Walton's *Life* of him is delightful; but one who desires the whole story should not fail of reading Dr. Grosart's essay, prefatory to the works of George Herbert, in the *Fuller Worthies' Library,* London, 1874.

And now, that I have quoted this, I wish that I had quoted another; and so it would be, I suppose, were I to go through the little book. One cannot go amiss of lines that will show his tenderness, his strong religious feeling, his gloomy coloring, his quaint conceits—with not overmuch rhythmic grace, but a certain spiritual unction that commends him to hosts of devout-minded people everywhere. Yet I cannot help thinking that he would have been lost sight of earlier in the swarm of seventeenth-century poets, had it not been for a certain romantic glow attaching to his short life. And first, he was a scion from the old Pembroke stock, born in a great castle on the Welsh borders, and bred in luxury. He went to Cambridge for study at a time when he may have encountered there the grim boy-student, Oliver Cromwell, or possibly that other fair-faced Cambridge student, John Milton, who was upon the rolls eight years later. He was a young fellow of rare scholarship, winning many honors; was tall, spare, with an eagle eye; and so he wins upon old James I., when he comes down on a visit to the University (the Mother Herbert managing to have the King see his best points, even to his silken doublets and his jewelled buckles, of which

the lad was fond). And he is taken into favor, bandies compliments with the monarch, goes again and again to London and to court; sees Chancellor Bacon familiarly—corrects proofs for him—and has hopes of high preferment. But his chief patron dies; the King dies; and that bubble of royal inflation is at an end.

It was after long mental struggle, it would seem, that George Herbert, whom we know as the saintly poet, let the hopes of court consequence die out of his heart. But once wedded to the Church his religious activities and sanctities knew no hesitations. His marriage even was an incident that had no worldly or amorous delays. A Mr. Danvers, kinsman of Herbert's step-father, thought all the world of the poet, and declared his utter willingness that Herbert "should marry any one of his nine daughters [for he had so many], but rather Jane, because Jane was his beloved daughter." And to such good effect did the father talk to Jane, that she, as old Walton significantly tells us, was in love with the poet before yet she had seen him. Only four days after their first meeting these twain were married; nor did this sudden union bring such disastrous result as so swift an engineering of similar contracts is apt to show.

At Bemerton vicarage, almost under the shadow of Salisbury cathedral, he began, shortly thereafter, that saintly and poetic life which his verse illustrates and which every memory of him ennobles. His charities were beautiful and constant; his love of the flesh, his early "choler," and all courtly leanings crucified. Even the peasants thereabout stayed the plough and listened reverently (another Angelus!) when the sounds of his "Praise-bells" broke upon the air. It is a delightful picture the old Angler biographer gives of him there in his quiet vicarage of Bemerton, or footing it away over Salisbury Plain, to lift up his orison in symphony with the organ notes that pealed from underneath the arches of Salisbury's wondrous cathedral.

Yet over all the music and the poems of this Church poet, and over his life, a tender gloom lay constantly; the grave and death were always in his eye—always in his best verses. And after some half-dozen years of poetic battling with the great problems of life and of death, and a further battling with the chills and fogs of Wiltshire, that smote him sorely, he died.

He was buried at Bemerton, where a new church has been built in his honor. It may be found on the high-road leading west from

Salisbury, and only a mile and a half away; and at Wilton—the carpet town—which is only a fifteen minutes' walk beyond, may be found that gorgeous church, built not long ago by another son of the Pembroke stock (the late Lord Herbert of Lea), who perhaps may have had in mind the churchly honors due to his poetic kinsman; and yet all the marbles which are lavished upon this Wilton shrine are poorer, and will sooner fade than the mosaic of verse builded into *The Temple* of George Herbert.

### ROBERT HERRICK

I DEAL with a clergyman again; but there are clergymen—and clergymen.

Robert Herrick[1] was the son of a London goldsmith, born on Cheapside, not far away from that Mermaid Tavern of which mention has been made; and it is very likely that the young Robert, as a boy, may have stood before the Tavern windows on tiptoe, listening to the drinking songs that came pealing forth when Ben Jonson and the rest were in their

[1] Robert Herrick, b. (or at least baptized) 1591; d. 1674. The fullest edition of his works is that edited by Dr. Grosart, and published by Chatto & Windus, London, 1876.

first lusty manhood. He studied at Cambridge, receiving, may be, some scant help from his rich uncle, Sir William Herrick, who had won his title by giving good jewel bargains to King James. He would seem to have made a long stay in Cambridge; and only in 1620, when our Pilgrims were beating toward Plymouth shores, do we hear of him domiciled in London —learning the town, favored by Ben Jonson and his fellows, perhaps apprenticed to the goldsmith craft, certainly putting jewels into fine settings of verse even then; some of them with coarse flaws in them, but full of a glitter and sparkle that have not left them yet. Nine years later, after such town experiences as we cannot trace, he gets, somehow, appointment to a church living down in Devonshire at Dean Prior. His parish was on the southeastern edge of that great heathery stretch of wilderness called Dartmoor Forest: out of this, and from under cool shadows of the Tors, ran brooks which in the cleared valleys were caught by rude weirs and shot out in irrigating skeins of water upon the grassland. Yet it was far away from any echo of the Mermaid; old traditions were cherished there; old ways were reckoned good ways; and the ploughs of that region are still the clumsiest to be found in

England. There Robert Herrick lived, preaching and writing poems, through those eighteen troublous years which went before the execution of Charles I. What the goldsmith-vicar's sermons were we can only conjecture: what the poems were he writ, we can easily guess from the flowers that enjewel them, or the rarer "noble numbers" which take hold on religious sanctities. This preacher-poet twists the lilies and roses into bright little garlands, that blush and droop in his pretty couplets, as they did in the vicar's garden of Devon. The daffodils and the violets give out their odors to him, if he only writes their names.

Hear what he says to Phyllis, and how the numbers flow:

"The soft, sweet moss shall be thy bed,
With crawling woodbine overspread:
By which the silver-shedding streams
Shall gently melt thee into dreams.
Thy clothing next, shall be a gown
Made of the fleeces' purest down.
The tongues of kids shall be thy meat;
Their milk thy drink; and thou shalt eat
The paste of filberts for thy bread,
With cream of cowslips butterèd:
Thy feasting table shall be hills
With daisies spread and daffodils;

Where thou shalt sit, and Red-breast by,
For meat, shall give thee melody."

Then again, see how in his soberer and meditative moods, he can turn the rich and resonant Litany of the Anglican Church into measures of sweet sound:

"In the hour of my distress,
When temptations me oppress,
And when I my sins confess,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

"When I lie within my bed,
Sick in heart, and sick in head,
And with doubts discomforted,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

"When the house doth sigh and weep,
And the world is drown'd in sleep,
Yet mine eyes the watch do keep,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

"When the passing bell doth toll,
And the furies in a shoal
Come, to fright a parting soul,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

"When the judgment is reveal'd,
And that opened which was seal'd;
When to thee I have appeal'd,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!"

Now, in reading these two poems of such opposite tone, and yet of agreeing verbal harmonies, one would say—here is a singer, serene, devout, of delicate mould, loving all beautiful things in heaven and on earth. One would look for a man saintly of aspect, deep-eyed, tranquil, too ethereal for earth.

Well, I must tell the truth in these talks, so far as I can find it, no matter what cherished images may break down. This Robert Herrick was a ponderous, earthy-looking man, with huge double chin, drooping cheeks, a great Roman nose, prominent glassy eyes, that showed around them the red lines begotten of strong potions of Canary, and the whole set upon a massive neck which might have been that of Heliogabalus.[1] It was such a figure as the artists would make typical of a man who loves the grossest pleasures.

The poet kept a pet goose at the vicarage, and also a pet pig, which he taught to drink beer out of his own tankard; and an old parish-

[1] Dr. Grosart objects that most portraits are too gross: I am content if comparison be made only with the engraving authorized by Dr. Grosart, and authenticated by his careful investigation and a warm admiration for his subject.

ioner, for whose story Anthony à Wood is sponsor, tells us that on one occasion when his little Devon congregation would not listen to him as he thought they ought to listen, he dashed his sermon on the floor, and marched with tremendous stride out of church—home to fondle his pet pig.

When Charles I. came to grief, and when the Puritans began to sift the churches, this Royalist poet proved a clinker that was caught in the meshes and thrown aside. This is not surprising. It was after his enforced return to London, and in the year 1648 (one year before Charles' execution at Whitehall), that the first authoritative publication was made of the *Hesperides, or Works, both Humane and Divine, of Robert Herrick, Esq.*—his clerical title dropped.

There were those critics and admirers who saw in Herrick an allegiance to the methods of Catullus; others who smacked in his epigrams the verbal felicities of Martial; but surely there is no need, in that fresh spontaneity of the Devon poet, to hunt for classic parallels; nature made him one of her own singers, and by instincts born with him he fashioned words and fancies into jewelled shapes. The "more 's the pity" for those gross indelicacies which

smirch so many pages; things unreadable; things which should have been unthinkable and unwritable by a clergyman of the Church of England. To what period of his life belonged his looser verses it is hard to say; perhaps to those early days when, fresh from Cambridge, Ben Jonson patted him on the shoulder approvingly; perhaps to those later years when, soured by his ejection from the Church, he dropped his Reverend, and may have capped verses with such as Davenant or Lovelace, and others, whose antagonism of Puritanism provoked wantonness of speech.

At the restoration of Charles II., Herrick was reinstated in his old parish in Devonshire, and died there, among the meadows and the daffodils, at the ripe age of eighty-four. And as we part with this charming singer, we cannot forbear giving place to this bit of his penitential verse:

"For these my unbaptizèd rhymes
Writ in my wild unhallowed times,
For every sentence, clause, and word
That 's not inlaid with thee, O Lord;
Forgive me, God, and blot each line
Out of my book, that is not thine!"

## REVOLUTIONARY TIMES

I HAVE given the reader a great many names to remember to-day; they are many, because we have found no engrossing one whose life and genius have held us to a long story. But we should never enjoy the great memories except they were set in the foil of lesser ones, to emphasize their glories.

The writers of this particular period—some of whom I have named—fairly typify and illustrate the drift of letters away from the outspoken ardors and full-toned high exuberance of Elizabethan days, to something more coy, more schooled, more reticent, more measured, more tame.[1] The cunning of word arrangement comes into the place of spontaneous, maybe vulgar wit; humor is saddled with schoolcraftiness; melodious echoes take the place of fresh bursts of sound. Poetry, that gurgled out by its own wilful laws of progression, now runs more in channels that old laws have marked. Words and language that had been used to tell straightforwardly stories of love

[1] Herrick is not an example of this; but Herbert is; so is Overbury with his "Wife;" so is Vaughan; so is Browne.

and passion and suffering are now put to uses of pomp and decoration.

Moreover, in Elizabethan times, when a great monarch and great ministers held the reins of power undisturbed and with a knightly hand, minstrelsy, wherever it might lift its voice, had the backing and the fostering support of great tranquillity and great national pride. In the days when the Armada was crushed, when British ships and British navigators brought every year tales of gold, tales of marvellous new shores, when princes of the proudest courts came flocking to pay suit to England's great Virgin Queen, what poet should not sing at his loudest and his bravest? But in the times into which we have now drifted, there is no tranquillity; the fever of Puritans against Anglicans, of Independents against Monarchy Men, is raging through all the land; pride in the kingship of such as James I. had broken down; pride in the kingship of the decorous Charles I. has broken down again. All intellectual ardors run into the channels of the new strifes. Only through little rifts in the stormy sky do the sunny gleams of poesy break in.

There are colonies, too, planted over seas, and growing apace in these days, whither the

eyes and thoughts of many of the bravest and clearest thinkers are turning. Even George Herbert, warmest of Anglicans, and of the noble house of Pembroke, was used to say, "Religion[1] is going over seas." They were earnest, hard workers, to be sure, who went—keen-thoughted—far-seeing—most diligent—not up to poems indeed, save some little occasional burst of melodious thanksgiving. But they carried memories of the best and of the strongest that belonged to the intellectual life of England. The ponderous periods of Richard Hooker, and the harshly worded wise things of John Selden,[2] found lodgement in souls that were battling with the snows and pine-woods where Andover and Salem and Newburyport were being planted. And over there, maybe, first of all, would hope kindle

[1] "Religion stands on tiptoe in our land
Ready to pass to the American strand.
My God, Thou dost prepare for them a way,
By carrying first their gold from them away;
For gold and grace did never yet agree;
Religion always sides with Poverty."
—HERBERT'S *The Church Militant.*

[2] John Selden, b. 1584; d. 1654. His *Table-Talk,* by which he is best known, was published in 1689. Coleridge said, "It contains more weighty bullion sense than I have ever found in the same number of pages of any uninspired writer."

and faith brighten at sound of that fair young Puritan poet, who has just now, in Cambridge, sung his "Hymn of the Nativity." [1]

But the storm and the wreck were coming. There were forewarnings of it in the air; forewarnings of it in the court and in Parliament; forewarnings of it in every household. City was to be pitted against city; brother against brother; and in that "sea of trouble," down went the King and the leaders of old, and up rose the Commonwealth and the leaders of the new faith.

In our next talk we shall find all England rocking on that red wave of war. You would think poets should be silent, and the eloquent dumb; but we shall hear, lifting above the uproar, the golden language of Jeremy Taylor—the measured cadences of Waller—the mellifluous jingle of Suckling and of his Royalist brothers, and drowning all these with its grand sweep of sound, the majestic organ-music of Milton.

[1] John Milton: written 1629.

## CHAPTER IV

I DID not hold the reader's attention long to the nightmare tragedies of Webster and Ford, though they show shining passages of amazing dramatic power. Marston was touched upon, and that satiric vein of his, better known perhaps than his more ambitious work. We spoke of Massinger, whose money-monster, Giles Overreach, makes one think of the railway wreckers of our time; then came the gracious and popular Beaumont and Fletcher, twins in work and in friendship; the former dying in the same year with Shakespeare, and Fletcher dying the same year with King James (1625). I spoke of that Prince Harry who promised well, but died young, and of Charles, whose sad story will come to ampler mention in our present talk. We made record of the death of Ben Jonson—of the hack-writing service of James Howell—of the dilettante qualities of Sir Henry Wotton, and of the ever-delightful work and enduring fame of the old angler, Izaak Walton. And last we closed our

talk with sketches of two poets: the one, George Herbert, to whom his priestly work and his saintly verse were "all in all;" and the other, Robert Herrick, born to a goldsmith's craft, but making verses that glittered more than all the jewels of Cheapside.

## KING CHARLES AND HIS FRIENDS

We open this morning upon times when New-England towns were being planted among the pine-woods, and the decorous, courtly, unfortunate Charles I. had newly come to the throne. Had the King been only plain Charles Stuart, he would doubtless have gone through life with the reputation of an amiable, courteous gentleman, not over-sturdy in his friendships[1]—a fond father and good husband, with a pretty taste in art and in books, but strongly marked with some obstinacies about the ways of wearing his rapier, or of tying his cravat, or of overdrawing his bank account.

In the station that really fell to him those obstinacies took hold upon matters which brought him to grief. The man who stood next to Charles, and who virtually governed him, was that George Villiers, Duke of Buck-

[1] Specially instanced in his final desertion of Strafford.

ingham, who by his fine doublets, fine dancing, and fine presence, had very early commended himself to the old King James, and now lorded it with the son. He was that Steenie who in Scott's *Fortunes of Nigel* plays the braggadocio of the court: he had attended Prince Charles upon that Quixotic errand of his, incognito, across Europe, to play the wooer at the feet of the Infanta of Spain; and when nothing came of all that show of gallantry and the lavishment of jewels upon the dusky heiress of Castile, the same Buckingham had negotiated the marriage with the French princess, Henrietta. He was a brazen courtier, a shrewd man of the world; full of all accomplishments; full of all profligacy. He made and unmade bishops and judges, and bolstered the King in that antagonism to the Commons of England which was rousing the dangerous indignation of such men as Eliot and Hampden and Pym. Private assassination, however, took him off before the coming of the great day of wrath. You must not confound this Duke of Buckingham with another George Villiers, also Duke of Buckingham, who was his son, and who figured largely in the days of Charles II.—being even more witty, and more graceful, and more profligate—if possible—than his father; a liter-

ary man withal, and the author of a play[1] which had great vogue.

Another striking figure about the court of Charles was a small, red-faced man, keen-eyed, sanctimonious, who had risen from the humble ranks (his father having been a clothier in a small town of Berkshire) to the position of Archbishop of Canterbury. So starched was he in his High-Church views that the Pope had offered him the hat of a cardinal. He made the times hard for Non-conformists; your ancestors and mine, if they emigrated in those days, may very likely have been pushed over seas by the edicts of Archbishop Laud. His monstrous intolerance was provoking, and intensifying that agitation in the religious world of England which Buckingham had already provoked in the political world; and the days of wrath were coming.

This Archbishop Laud is not only keen-sighted but he is bountiful and helpful within the lines of his own policy. He endowed Oxford with great, fine buildings. Some friend has told him that a young preacher of wonderful attractions has made his appearance at St. Paul's—down on a visit from Cambridge—a

[1] "The Rehearsal." Complete edition of his works published in 1775. George Villiers, b. 1627; d. 1688.

young fellow, wonderfully handsome, with curling locks and great eyes full of expression, and a marvellous gift of language; and the Archbishop takes occasion to see him or hear him; and finding that beneath such exterior there is real vigor and learning, he makes place for him as Fellow at Oxford; appoints him presently his own chaplain, and gives him a living down in Rutland.

## JEREMY TAYLOR

This priest, of such eloquence and beauty, was Jeremy Taylor,[1] who was the son of a barber at Cambridge, was entered at Caius College as sizar, or charity scholar, just one year after Milton was entered at Christ College, and from the door of his father's shop may have looked admiringly many a time upon the

> "rosy cheeks
> Angelical, keen eye, courageous look,
> And conscious step of purity and pride,"

which belonged even then to the young Puritan poet. But Jeremy Taylor was not a Puri-

[1] Jeremy Taylor, b. 1613; d. 1667. First collected edition of his works issued in 1822 (Bishop Heber); reissued, with revision (C. P. Eden), 1852–61.

tan; never came to know Milton personally. One became the great advocate and the purest illustration of the tenets of Episcopacy in England; and the other—eventually—their most effective and weighty opponent. In 1640, only one year after Jeremy Taylor was established in his pleasant Rutland rectory, Archbishop Laud went to the Tower, not to come forth till he should go to the scaffold; and in the Civil War, breaking out presently, Jeremy Taylor joined the Royalists, was made chaplain to the King, saw battle and siege and wounds; but in the top of the strife he is known by his silvery voice and his exuberant piety, and by the rare eloquence which colors prayer and sermon with the bloody tinge of war and the pure light of heaven. He is wounded (as I said), he is imprisoned, and finally, by the chances of battle, he is stranded in a small country town near to Caermarthen, in South Wales.

"In the great storm," he says, "which dashed the vessel of the Church all in pieces, I was cast on the coast of Wales, and in a little boat thought to have enjoyed that rest and quietness which in England I could not hope for."

The little boat he speaks of was the obscure mountain home where he taught school, and

where he received, some time, visits from the famous John Evelyn,[1] who wrote charming books in these days about woods and gardens, and who befriended the poor stranded chaplain. Here, too, he wrote that monument of toleration, *The Liberty of Prophesying,* a work which would be counted broad in its teachings even now, and which alienated a great many of his more starched fellows in the Church. A little fragment from the closing pages of this book will show at once his method of illustration and his extreme liberality:

"When Abraham sat at his tent door, waiting to entertain strangers, he espied an old man stopping by the way, leaning on his staff, weary with much travel, and who was a hundred years of age.

"He received him kindly, provided supper, caused him to sit down; but observing that the old man ate, and prayed not, neither begged for a blessing on his meat, he asked him why he did not worship the God of Heaven?

"The old man told him he had been used to worship the sun only.

"Whereupon Abraham in anger thrust him from his tent. When he was gone into the evils of the night, God called to Abraham, and said,

[1] John Evelyn, b. 1620; d. 1706. His best known books are his *Diary,* and *Sylva*—a treatise on arboriculture.

'I have suffered this man, whom thou hast cast out, these hundred years, and couldest thou not endure him one night, when he gave thee no trouble?' Upon this Abraham fetched the man back and gave him entertainment: 'Go thou and do likewise,' said the preacher, 'and thy charity will be rewarded by the God of Abraham.'"[1]

Jeremy Taylor did not learn this teaching from Archbishop Laud, but from the *droiture* of his own conscience, and the kindness of his own heart. He wrote much other and most delectable matter in his years of Welsh retirement, when a royal chaplain was a bugbear in England. He lost sons, too—who had gone to the bad under the influences of that young Duke of Buckingham I mentioned; but at last, when the restoration of Charles II. came, he was given a bishopric in the wilds of Ireland, in a sour, gloomy country, with sour and gloomy looks all around him, which together, broke him down at the age of fifty-five. I have spoken thus much of him, because he is a man to be remembered as the most eloquent, and the most kindly, and the most tolerant of all the

[1] I have not been careful to give the *ipsissima verba* of Taylor's version of this old Oriental legend, which has been often cited, but never more happily transplanted into the British gardens of doctrine than by Jeremy Taylor.

Church of England people in that day; and because his treatises on *Holy Living* and *Holy Dying* will doubtless give consolation to thousands of desponding souls, in the years to come, as they have in the years that are past. He was saturated through and through with learning and with piety; and they gurgled from him together in a great tide of mellifluous language. The ardors and fervors of Elizabethan days seem to have lapped over upon him in that welter of the Commonwealth wars. He has been called the Shakespeare of the pulpit; I should rather say the Spenser—there is such unchecked, and uncheckable, affluence of language and illustration; thought and speech struggling together for precedence, and stretching on and on, in ever so sweet and harmonious jangle of silvery sounds.

### A ROYALIST AND A PURITAN

ANOTHER Royalist of these times, of a different temper, was Sir John Suckling:[1] a poet too, very rich, bred in luxury, a man of the world, who had seen every court in Europe worth seeing, who dashed off songlets and bal-

[1] John Suckling, b. 1609; d. 1642. An edition of his poems, edited by W. C. Hazlitt, was published in 1874.

lads between dinners and orgies; which songlets often hobbled on their feet by reason of those multiplied days of high living; but yet they had prettinesses in them which have kept them steadily alive all down to these prosaic times. I give a sample from his "Ballad upon a Wedding," though it may be over-well known:

"Her cheeks so rare a white was on
No daisy makes comparison
(Who sees them is undone):
For streaks of red were mingled there
Such as are on a Catharine pear,
The side that 's next the sun.

"Her feet beneath her petticoat
Like little mice stole in and out
As if they feared the light.
But O, she dances such a way!
No sun upon an Easter day
Is half so fine a sight!"

He was a frequenter of a tavern which stood at the Southwark end of London Bridge. Aubrey says he was one of the best bowlers of his time. He played at cards, too, rarely well, and "did use to practise by himself abed." He was rich; he was liberal; he was accomplished —almost an "Admirable Crichton." His first

military service was in support of Gustavus Adolphus, in Germany. At the time of trouble with the Scots (1639) he raised a troop for the King's service that bristled with gilded spurs and trappings; but he never did much serious fighting on British soil; and in 1641— owing to what was counted treasonable action in behalf of Strafford, he was compelled to leave England.

He crossed over to the Continent, wandered into Spain, and somehow became (as a current tradition reported) a victim of the Inquisition there, and was put to cruel torture; a strange subject surely to be put to the torture—in this life. He was said to be broken by this experience, and strayed away, after his escape from those priest-fangs, to Paris, where, not yet thirty-five, and with such promise in him of better things, he came to his death in some mysterious way: some said by a knife-blade which a renegade servant had fastened in his boot; but most probably by suicide. There is, however, great obscurity in regard to his life abroad.

He wrote some plays, which had more notice than they should have had; possibly owing to a revival of dramatic interests very strangely brought about in Charles I.'s time—a revival

which was due to the over-eagerness and exaggeration of attacks made upon it by the Puritans: noticeable among these was that of William Prynne[1]—"utter barrister" of Lincoln's Inn. "Utter barrister" does not mean æsthetic barrister, but one not yet come to full range of privilege.

This Prynne was a man of dreadful insistence and severities; he would have made a terrific schoolmaster. He was the author, in the course of his life, of no less than one hundred and eighty distinct works; many of them, it is true, were pamphlets, but others terribly bulky —an inextinguishable man; that onslaught on the drama and dramatic people, and play-goers, including people of the Court, called *Histriomastix,* was a foul-mouthed, close-printed, big quarto of a thousand pages. One would think such a book could do little harm; but he was tried for it, was heavily fined, and sentenced to stand in the pillory and lose his ears. He pleaded strongly against the sentence, and for its remission upon "divers passages [as he says in his petition] fallen inconsiderately from my pen in a book called *Histriomastix.*"

[1] William Prynne, b. 1600; d. 1669. He was a Somersetshire man, severely Calvinistic, and before he was thirty had written about the *Unloveliness of Love Locks.*

But he pleaded in vain; there was no sympathy for him. Ought there to be for a man who writes a book of a thousand quarto pages —on any subject? The violence of this diatribe made a reaction in favor of the theatre; his fellow-barristers of Lincoln's Inn hustled him out of their companionship, and got up straightway a gay masque to demonstrate their scorn of his reproof.

They say he bore his punishment sturdily, though the fumes of his book, which was burned just below his nose, came near to suffocate him. Later still, he underwent another sentence for offences growing out of his unrelenting and imperious Puritanism—this time in company with one Burton (not Robert Burton,[1] of the *Anatomy of Melancholy*), who was a favorite with the people and had flowers strown before him as he walked to the pillory. But Prynne had no flowers, and his ears having been once cropt, the hangman had a rough time (a very rough time for Prynne) in getting at his task. Thereafter he was sent to

[1] Robert Burton, b. 1576; d. 1639, was too remarkable a man to get his only mention in a note; but we cannot always govern our spaces. His best-known work, *The Anatomy of Melancholy,* is an excellent book to steal from—whether quotations or crusty notions of the author's own.

prison in the isle of Jersey; but he kept writing, ears or no ears, and we may hear his strident voice again—hear it in Parliament, too.

## COWLEY AND WALLER

Two other poets of these times I name, because of the great reputation they once had; a reputation far greater than they maintain now. These are Abraham Cowley and Edmund Waller.[1] The former of these (Cowley) was the son of a London grocer, whose shop was not far from the home of Izaak Walton; he was taught at Westminster School, and at Cambridge, and blazed up precociously at the age of fifteen in shining verses.[2] Indeed his aptitude, his ingenuities, his scholarship, kept him in the first rank of men of letters all through his day, and gave him burial between Spenser and Chaucer in Westminster Abbey. He would take a humbler place if he were disentombed now; yet, in Cromwell's time, or in that of Charles II., the average reading man knew Cowley better than he knew Milton, and

[1] Abraham Cowley, b. 1618; d. 1667. Edmund Waller, b. 1605; d. 1687.

[2] I give a taste of these young verses, first published

admired him more. I give you a fragment of what is counted his best; it is from his "Hymn to Light:"

"When, Goddess, thou lift'st up thy waken'd
head
Out of the morning's purple bed,
Thy quire of birds about thee play,
And all the joyful world salutes the rising day.

"All the world's bravery, that delights our eyes,
Is but thy sev'ral liveries,
Thou the rich dye on them bestowest,
Thy nimble pencil paints this landscape as thou
goest.

in the *Poetical Blossoms* of 1633; also sampled approvingly by the mature Cowley in his essay *On Myself:*

"This only grant me, that my means may lie
Too low for envy, for contempt too high.
Some honor I would have
Not from great deeds, but good alone.
The unknown are better than ill known;
Rumour can ope the grave.

"Thus would I double my life's fading space,
For he that runs it well, twice runs his race.
And in this true delight,
These unbought sports, this happy state,
I would not fear nor wish my fate.
But boldly say each night
To-morrow let my sun his beams display,
Or in clouds hide them;— I have liv'd to-day!"

"A crimson garment in the Rose thou wear'st;
A crown of studded gold thou bear'st,
The virgin lilies in their white,
Are clad but with the lawn of almost naked
light!"

If I were to read a fragment from Tennyson in contrast with Cowley's treatment of a similar theme I think you might wonder less why his reputation has suffered gradual eclipse. Shall we try? Cowley wrote a poem in memory of a dear friend, and I take one of the pleasantest of its verses:

"Ye fields of Cambridge, our dear Cambridge,
say,
Have ye not seen us walking every day?
Was there a tree about, which did not know
The love betwixt us two?
Henceforth, ye gentle trees, for ever fade,
Or your sad branches thicker join,
And into darksome shades combine,
Dark as the grave wherein my friend is laid."

Tennyson wrote of *his* dead friend, and here is a verse of it:

"The path by which we twain did go,
Which led by tracts that pleased us well
Thro' four sweet years, arose and fell
From flower to flower, from snow to snow;

"But where the path we walk'd began
To slant the fifth autumnal slope,
As we descended, following hope,
*There* sat the shadow feared of man,

"Who broke our fair companionship,
And spread his mantle dark and cold,
And wrapped thee formless in the fold,
And dulled the murmur on thy lip,

"And bore thee where I could not see
Nor follow—though I walk in haste;
And think—that somewhere in the waste,
The shadow sits, and waits for me!"

Can I be wrong in thinking that under the solemn lights of these stanzas the earlier poet's verse grows dim?

Cowley was a good Kingsman; and in the days of the Commonwealth held position of secretary to the exiled Queen Henrietta, in Paris; he did, at one time, think of establishing himself in one of the American colonies; returned, however, to his old London haunts, and, wearying of the city, sought retirement at Chertsey, on the Thames' banks (where his old house is still to be seen), and where he wrote, in graceful prose and cumbrous verse, on subjects related to country life—which he loved

overmuch—and died there among his trees and the meadows.

Waller was both Kingsman and Republican —steering deftly between extremes, so as to keep himself and his estates free from harm. This will weaken your sympathy for him at once—as it should do. He lived in a grand way—affected the philosopher; *was* such a philosopher as quick-witted selfishness makes; yet he surely had wonderful aptitudes in dealing with language, and could make its harmonious numbers flow where and how he would. Waller has come to a casual literary importance in these days under the deft talking and writing of those dilettante critics who would make this author the pivot (as it were) on which British poesy swung away from the "hysterical riot of the Jacobeans" into measured and orderly classic cadence. It is a large influence to attribute to a single writer, though his grace and felicities go far to justify it. And it is further to be remembered that such critics are largely given to the discussion of *technique* only; they write as distinct art-masters; while we, who are taking our paths along English Letters for many other things besides art and rhythm, will, I trust, be pardoned for thinking that there is very little pith or weighty

matter in this great master of the juggleries of sound.

Waller married early in life, but lost his wife while still very young; thenceforth, for many years—a gay and coquettish widower—he pursued the Lady Dorothy Sidney with a storm of love verses, of which the best (and it is really amazingly clever in its neatness and point) is this:

"Go, lovely Rose,
Tell her, that wastes her time and me,
That now she knows
When I resemble her to thee
How sweet and fair she seems to be.
Tell her that 's young,
And shuns to have her graces spied,
That hadst thou sprung
In deserts where no men abide,
Thou must have, uncommended, died."

But neither this, nor a hundred others, brought the Lady Dorothy to terms: she married—like a wise woman—somebody else. And he? He went on singing as chirpingly as ever—sang till he was over eighty.

## JOHN MILTON

And now we come to a poet of a larger build —a weightier music—and of a more indomitable spirit; a poet who wooed the world with his songs; and the world has never said him "Nay." I mean John Milton.[1]

He is the first great poet we have encountered, in respect to whom we can find in contemporary records full details of family, lodgement, and birth. A great many of these details have been swooped together in Dr. Masson's recently completed *Life and Times of Milton,* which I would more earnestly commend to your reading were it not so utterly long—six fat volumes of big octavo—in the which the pith and kernel about Milton, the man, floats around like force meat-balls in a great sea of historic soup. Our poet was born in Bread Street, just out of Cheapside, in London, in the year 1608.

In Cheapside—it may be well to recall—stood the Mermaid Tavern; and it stood not more than half a block away from the corner where Milton's father lived. And on that cor-

[1] John Milton, b. 1608; d. 1674. Editions of his works are numberless; but Dr. Masson is the fullest and best accredited contributor to Miltonian literature.

ner—who knows?—the boy, eight years old, or thereby, when Shakespeare died, may have lingered to see the stalwart Ben Jonson go tavernward for his cups, or may be, John Marston, or Dekker, or Philip Massinger—all these being comfortably inclined to taverns.

The father of this Bread Street lad was a scrivener by profession; that is, one who drafted legal papers; a well-to-do man as times went; able to give his boy some private schooling; proud of him, too; proud of his clear white and red face, and his curly auburn hair carefully parted—almost a girl's face; so well-looking, indeed, that the father employed a good Dutch painter of those days to take his portrait; the portrait is still in existence—dating from 1618, when the poet was ten, showing him in a banded velvet doublet and a stiff vandyke collar, trimmed about with lace. In those times, or presently after, he used to go to St. Paul's Grammar School; of which Lily, of Lily's *Latin Grammar,* was the first master years before. It was only a little walk for him, through Cheapside, and then, perhaps, Paternoster Row—the school being under the shadow of that great cathedral, which was burned fifty years after. He studied hard there; studied at home, too; often, he says himself, when only fourteen,

studying till twelve at night. He loved books, and he loved better to be foremost.

He turns his hand to poetry even then. Would you like to see a bit of what he wrote at fifteen? Well, here it is, in a scrap of psalmody:

"Let us blaze his name abroad,
For of gods, he is the God,
. . . . . .
Who by his wisdom did create
The painted heavens so full of state,
. . . . . .
And caused the golden tressèd sun
All the day long his course to run,
The hornèd moon to hang by night
Amongst her spangled sisters bright;
For his mercies aye endure,
Ever faithful, ever sure."

It is not of the best, but I think will compare favorably with most that is written by young people of fifteen. At Christ's College, Cambridge, whither he went shortly afterward—his father being hopeful that he would take orders in the Church—he was easily among the first; he wrote Latin hexameters, quarrelled with his tutor (notwithstanding his handsome face had given to him the mocking title of "The Lady"),

had his season of *rustication* up in London, sees all that is doing in theatrics thereabout, but goes back to study more closely than ever.

The little Christmas song,

"It was the winter wild,
While the heaven-born Child," etc.,

belongs to his Cambridge life; though his first public appearance as an author was in the "Ode to Shakespeare," attaching with other and various commendatory verses to the second folio edition of that author's dramas, published in the year 1632.

Milton was then twenty-four, had been six or seven years at Cambridge; did not accept kindly his father's notion of taking orders in the Church, but had exaggerated views of a grandiose life of study and literary work; in which views his father—sensible man that he was—did not share; but—kind man that he was—he did not strongly combat them. So we find father and son living together presently, some twenty miles away from London, in a little country hamlet called Horton, where the old gentleman had purchased a cottage for a final home when his London business was closed up.

Here, too, our young poet studies—not

books only, borrowed where he can, and bought if he can; but studies also fields and trees and skies and rivers, and all the natural objects that are to take embalmment sooner or later in his finished verse. Here he wrote, almost within sight of Windsor towers, "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso." You know them; but they are always new and always fresh; freshest when you go out from London on a summer's day to where the old tower of Horton Church still points the road, and trace there (if you can)

> "The russet lawns and fallows gray
> Where the nibbling flocks do stray,
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Meadows trim with daisies pied,
> Shallow brooks and rivers wide.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Sometimes with secure delight
> The upland hamlets will invite,
> When the merry bells ring round
> And the jocund rebecks sound
> To many a youth and many a maid
> Dancing in the chequered shade;
> And young and old come forth to play
> On a sunshine holiday."

In reading such verse we do not know where to stop—at least, I do not. He writes, too, in

that country quietude, within sight of Windsor forest, his charming "Lycidas," one of the loveliest of memorial poems, and the "Comus," which alone of all the masques of that time, and preceding times, has gone in its entirety into the body of living English literature.

In 1638, then thirty years old, equipped in all needed languages and scholarship, he goes for further study and observation to the Continent; he carries letters from Sir Henry Wotton; he sees the great Hugo Grotius at Paris; sees the sunny country of olives in Provence; sees the superb front of Genoa piling out from the blue waters of the Mediterranean; sees Galileo at Florence—the old philosopher too blind to study the face of the studious young Englishman that has come so far to greet him. He sees, too, what is best and bravest at Rome; among the rest St. Peter's, just then brought to completion, and in the first freshness of its great tufa masonry. He is fêted by studious young Italians; has the freedom of the Accademia della Crusca; blazes out in love sonnets to some dark-eyed signorina of Bologna; returns by Venice, and by Geneva where he hobnobs with the Diodati friends of his old schoolfellow, Charles Diodati; and comes home to England to find changes brewing—the Scotch

marching over the border with battle-drums—the Long Parliament portending—Strafford and Laud in way of impeachment—his old father drawing near to his end—and bloody war tainting all the air.

The father's fortune, never large, is found crippled at his death; and Milton, now thirty-two, must look out for his own earnings. He takes a house; first in Fleet Street, then near Aldersgate, with garden attached, where he has three or four pupils; his nephew Phillips[1] among them.

### MILTON'S MARRIAGE

It was while living there that he brought back, one day, a bride—Mary Powell; she was a young maiden in her teens, daughter of a well-established loyalist family near to Oxford. The young bride is at the quiet student's house in Aldersgate a month, perhaps two, when she goes down for a visit to her mother; she is to come back at Michaelmas; but Michaelmas comes, and she stays; Milton writes, and she stays; Milton writes again, and she stays; he sends a messenger—and she stays.

What is up, then, in this new household?

[1] John and Edward Phillips both with him; the latter only as pupil.

Milton, the scholar and poet, is up, straightway, to a treatise on divorce, whereby he would make it easy to undo yokes where parties are unevenly yoked. There is much scriptural support and much shrewd reasoning brought by his acuteness to the overthrow of those rulings which the common-sense of mankind has established; even now those who contend for easy divorce get their best weapons out of this old Miltonian armory.

Meantime the poet went on teaching, I suspect rapping his boys over the knuckles in these days for slight cause. But what does it all mean? It means incongruity; not the first case, nor will it be the last. He—abstracted, austere, bookish, with his head in the clouds; she—with her head in ribbons, and possibly loving orderly housewifery:[1] intellectual affinities and sympathies are certainly missing.

Fancy the poet just launched into the moulding of such verse as this:

"Hail, bounteous May, that dost inspire
Mirth and youth, and warm desire!
Woods and groves are of thy dressing——"

[1] More probably, perhaps, sulking for lack of her old gayeties of life in the range of Royal Oxford. Aubrey's accounts would favor this interpretation.

when a servant gives sharp rat-tat at the door, "Please, sir, missus says, 'Dinner 's waiting!'" But the poet sweeps on—

"O nightingale, that on yon blooming spray
Warblest at eve, when all the woods are still,
Thou, with fresh heat, the lover's heart dost fill,
Now timely sing, ere the rude bird of hate——"

And there is another rat-tat!—"Please, sir, missus says, 'Dinner is all getting cold.'" Still the poet ranges in fairyland—

"——ere the rude bird of hate
Foretell my hopeless doom, in some grove nigh,
As thou from year to year hast sung too late
For my relief, yet hadst no reason why——"

And now, maybe, it is the pretty mistress who comes with a bounce—"Mr. Milton, are you *ever* coming?"—and a quick bang of the door, which is a way some excellent petulant young women have of—not breaking the commandments.

There is a little prosaic half-line in the "Paradise Lost" (I don't think it was ever quoted before), which in this connection seems to me to have a very pathetic twang in it; 't is about Paradise and its charms—

"No fear lest dinner cool!"

However, it happens that through the advocacy of friends on both sides this great family breach is healed, or seems to be; and two years after, Milton and his recreant, penitent, and restored wife are living again together; lived together till her death; and she became the mother of his three daughters: Anne, who was crippled, never even learned to write, and used to be occupied with her needle; Mary, who was his amanuensis and reader most times, and Deborah, the youngest, who came to perform similar offices for him afterward.

Meantime the Royalist cause had suffered everywhere. The Powells (his wife's family having come to disaster) did—with more or less children—go to live with Milton. Whether the presence of the mother-in-law mended the poet's domesticity I doubt; doubt, indeed, if ever there was absolute harmony there.

On the year of the battle of Naseby appeared Milton's first unpretending booklet of poems,[1] containing with others, those already named, and not before printed. Earlier, how-

[1] *Poems of Mr. John Milton, both English and Latin, composed at several Times.* London, 1645.

ever, in the lifetime of the poet had begun the issue of those thunderbolts of pamphlets which he wrote on church discipline, education, on the liberty of unlicensed printing, and many another topic—cumbrous with great trails of intricate sentences, wondrous word-heaps, sparkling with learning, flaming with anger—with convolutions like a serpent's, and as biting as serpents.

A show is kept up of his school-keeping, but with doubtful success; for in 1647 we learn that "he left his great house in Barbican, and betook himself to a smaller in High Holborn, among those that open back into Lincoln's Inn Fields;" but there is no poem-making of importance (save one or two wondrous Sonnets) now, or again, until he is virtually an old man.

### THE ROYAL TRAGEDY

Meantime the tide of war is flowing back and forth over England and engrossing all hopes and fears. The poor King is one while a captive of the Scots, and again a captive of the Parliamentary forces, and is hustled from palace to castle. What shall be done with the royal prisoner? There are thousands who have fought against him who would have been

most glad of his escape; but there are others—weary of his doublings—who have vowed that this son of Baal shall go to his doom and bite the dust.

Finally, and quickly too (for events move with railroad speed), his trial comes—the trial of a King. A strange event for these English, who have venerated and feared and idolized so many kings and queens of so many royal lines. How the Royalist verse-makers must have fumed and raved! Milton, then just turned of forty, was, as I have said, living near High Holborn; the King was eight years his senior—was in custody at St. James's, a short way above Piccadilly. He brought to the trial all his kingly dignity, and wore it unflinchingly—refusing to recognize the jurisdiction of the Parliament, cuddling always obstinately that poor figment of the divine right of kings—which even then Milton, down in his Holborn garden, was sharpening his pen to undermine and destroy.

The sentence was death—a sentence that gave pause to many. Fairfax, and others such, would have declared against it; even crop-eared Prynne, who had suffered so much for his truculent Puritanism, protested against it; two-thirds of the population of England would

have done the same; but London and England and the army were all in the grip of an iron man whose name was Cromwell. Time sped; the King had only two days to live; his son Charles was over seas, never believing such catastrophe could happen; only two royal children—a princess of thirteen and a boy of eight—came to say adieu to the royal prisoner. "He sat with them some time at the window, taking them on his knees, and kissing them, and talking with them of their duty to their mother, and to their elder brother, the Prince of Wales." He carried his habitual dignity and calmness with him on the very morning, going between files of soldiers through St. James's Park—pointing out a tree which his brother Henry had planted—and on, across to Whitehall, where had come off many a gay, rollicking masque of Ben Jonson's, in presence of his father, James I. He was led through the window of the banqueting-hall—the guides show it now—where he had danced many a night, and so to the scaffold, just without the window, whence he could see up and down the vast court of Whitehall, from gate to gate,[1] paved

[1] In that day Whitehall Street was separated from Charing Cross by the famous gate of Holbeins; and in the other direction it was crossed, near Old Palace Yard, by the King's-Street Gate—thus forming a vast court.

with a great throng of heads. Even then and there rested on him the same kingly composure; the fine oval face, pale but unmoved; the peaked beard carefully trimmed, as you see it in the well-known pictures by Vandyke, at Windsor or at Blenheim.

He has a word with old Bishop Juxon, who totters beside him; a few words for others who are within hearing; examines the block, the axe; gives some brief cautions to the executioner; then, laying down his head, lifts his own hand for signal, and with a crunching thud of sound it is over.

And poet Milton—has he shown any relenting? Not one whit; he is austere among the most austere; in this very week he is engaged upon his defence of regicide, with its stinging, biting sentences. He is a friend and party to the new Commonwealth; two months only after the execution of the King, he is appointed Secretary to the State Council, and under it is conducting the Latin correspondence. He demolishes, by order of the same Council, the *Eikon Basilike* (supposed in that day to be the king's work) with his fierce onslaught of the *Eikonoklastes*. His words are bitter as gall; he even alludes, in no amiable tone—with acrid emphasis, indeed—to the absurd rumor, current with some, that the King, through his con-

fidential instrument, Buckingham, had poisoned his own father.

He is further appointed to the answering of Salmasius,[1] an answer with which all Europe presently rings. It was in these days, and with such work crowding him, that his vision fails; and to these days, doubtless belongs that noble sonnet on his blindness, which is worth our staying for, here and now:

"When I consider how my light is spent
Ere half my days, in this dark world and wide,
And that one talent, which is death to hide,
Lodged with me useless, though my soul more bent
To serve therewith my Maker, and present
My true account, lest he, returning, chide;
'Dost God exact day-labor, light denied?'
I fondly ask: But Patience, to prevent
That murmur, soon replies—'God doth not need
Either man's work, or his own gifts; who best
Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best; his state

[1] Salmasius, a Leyden professor, had been commissioned by Royalists to write a defence of Charles I., and vindicate his memory. Milton was commissioned to reply; and the result was—a Latin battle in Billingsgate.

Milton calls his antagonist "a grammatical louse, whose only treasure of merit and hope of fame consisted in a glossary."

Is kingly; thousands at his bidding speed
And post o'er land and ocean without rest;
They also serve, who only stand and wait.'"

Wonderful, is it not, that such a sonnet—so full of rare eloquence and rare philosophy—so full of all that most hallows our infirm humanity could be written by one—pouring out his execrations on the head of Salmasius—at strife in his own household—at strife (as we shall find) with his own daughters? Wonderful, is it not, that Carlyle could write as he did about the heroism of the humblest as well as bravest, and yet grow into a rage—over his wife's shoulders and at her cost—with a rooster crowing in his neighbor's yard? Ah, well, the perfect ones have not yet come upon our earth, whatever perfect poems they may write.

## CHANGE OF KINGS

But at last comes a new turn of the wheel to English fortunes. Cromwell is dead; the Commonwealth is ended; all London is throwing its cap in the air over the restoration of Charles II. Poor blind Milton[1] is in hiding and in peril. His name is down among those

[1] His blindness dating from the year 1652.

accessory to the murder of the King. The ear-cropped Prynne—who is now in Parliament, and who hates Milton as Milton scorned Prynne—is very likely hounding on those who would bring the great poet to judgment. 'T is long matter of doubt. Past his house near Red Lion Square the howling mob drag the bodies of Cromwell and Ireton, and hang them in their dead ghastliness.

Milton, however, makes lucky escape, with only a short term of prison; but for some time thereafter he was in fear of assassination. Such a rollicking daredevil, as Scott in his story of *Woodstock*, has painted for us in Roger Wildrake (of whom there were many afloat in those times) would have liked no better fun than to run his rapier through such a man as John Milton; and in those days he would have been pardoned for it.

That capital story of *Woodstock* one should read when they are upon these times of the Commonwealth. There are, indeed, anachronisms in it; kings escaping too early or too late, or dying a little out of time to accommodate the exigencies of the plot; but the characterization is marvellously spirited; and you see the rake-helly cavaliers, and the fine old king-ridden knights, and the sour-mouthed Indepen-

dents, and the glare and fumes and madness of the civil war, as you find them in few history pages.

Milton, meanwhile, in his quiet home again, revolves his old project of a great sacred poem. He taxes every visitor who can, to read to him in Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Dutch. His bookly appetite is omnivorous. His daughters have large share of this toil. Poor girls, they have been little taught, and not wisely. They read what they read only by rote, and count it severe taskwork. Their mother is long since dead, and a second wife, who lived only for a short time, dead too. We know very little of that second wife; but she is embalmed forever in a sonnet, from which I steal this fragment:—

"Methought I saw may late espousèd saint
Brought to me, like Alcestis from the grave;
. . . . . .
Her face was veiled, yet to my fancied sight
Love, sweetness, goodness in her person shin'd
So clear as in no face with more delight.
But oh, as to embrace me she inclined
I waked, she fled, and day brought back my night."

The Miltonian reading and the work goes

on, but affection, I fear, does not dominate the household; the daughters overtasked, with few indulgences, make little rebellions; and the blind, exacting old man is as unforgiving as the law. Americans should take occasion to see the great picture by Munkacsy, in the Lenox Gallery, New York, of Milton dictating *Paradise Lost;* it is in itself a poem; a dim Puritan interior; light coming through a latticed window and striking on the pale, somewhat cadaverous face of the old poet, who sits braced in his great armchair, with lips set together, and the daughters, in awed attention, listening or seeming to listen.

I am sorry there is so large room to doubt of the intellectual and affectionate sympathy existing between them; nevertheless—that it did not is soberly true; his own harsh speeches, which are of record, show it; their petulant innuendoes, which are also of record, show it.

Into this clouded household—over which love does not brood so fondly as we would choose to think—there comes sometimes, with helpfulness and sympathy, a certain Andrew Marvell, who had been sometime assistant to Milton in his official duties, and who takes his turn at the readings, and sees only the higher and better lights that shine there; and he had

written sweet poems of his own (to which I shall return), that have kept his name alive, and that will keep it alive, I think, forever.

There comes also into this home, in these days, very much to the surprise and angerment of the three daughters, a third wife to the old poet, after some incredibly short courtship.[1] She is only seven years the senior of the daughter Anne; but she seems to have been a sensible young person, not bookishly given, and looking after the household, while Anne and Mary and Deborah still wait, after a fashion, upon the student-wants of the poet. In fits of high abstraction he is now bringing the "Paradise" to a close—not knowing, or not caring, maybe, for the little bickerings which rise and rage and die away in the one-sided home.

I cannot stay to characterize his great poem; nor is there need; immortal in more senses than one; humanity counts for little in it; one pair of human creatures only, and these looked at, as it were, through the big end of the telescope; with gigantic, Godlike figures around one, or colossal demons prone on fiery floods. It is not a child's book; to place it in schools as a

[1] This marriage took place on February 24, 1662–63, the age of the bride being twenty-five, and Milton in his fifty-fifth year.

parsing-book is an atrocity that I hope is ended. Not, I think, till we have had some fifty years to view the everlasting fight between good and evil in this world, can we see in proper perspective the vaster battle which, under Milton's imagination, was pictured in Paradise between the same foes. Years only can so widen one's horizon as to give room for the reverberations of that mighty combat of the powers of light and darkness.

We talk of the organ-music of Milton. The term has its special significance; it gives hint of that large quality which opens heavenly spaces with its billows of sound; which translates us; which gives us a lookout from supreme heights, and so lifts one to the level of his "Argument." There is large learning in his great poem—weighty and recondite; but this spoils no music; great, cumbrous names catch sonorous vibrations under his modulating touch, and colossal shields and spears clash together like cymbals. The whole burden of his knowledges —Pagan, Christian, or Hebraic, lift up and sink away upon the undulations of his sublime verse, as heavy-laden ships rise and fall upon some great ground-swell making in from outer seas.

A bookish color is pervading; if he does not

steal flowers from books, he does what is better —he shows the fruit of them. There are stories of his debt to Cædmon, and still more authentic, of his debt to the Dutch poet Vondel,[1] and the old Provençal Bishop of Vienne,[2] who as early as the beginning of the sixth century wrote on kindred themes. There is hardly room for doubt that Milton not only knew, but literally translated some of the old Bishop's fine Latin lines, and put to his larger usage some of his epithets.

Must we not admit that—in the light of such developments—when the Puritan poet boasts of discoursing on

"Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme,"

[1] Vondel, b. 1587 (at Cologne); d. 1679. He was the author of many dramatic pieces, among which were "Jephtha," "Marie Stuart," "Lucifer" (*Luisevaar*). Vondel also wrote "Adam in Exile," and "Samson, or Divine Vengeance." This latter, according to a writer in *The Athenæum* of November 7, 1885, has suspicious points of resemblance with "Samson Agonistes."

Other allied topics of interest are discussed in same journal's notice of George Edmundson's book on the Milton and Vondel question (Trübner & Co., London, 1885).

Vondel survived the production of his "Lucifer" by a quarter of a century, and died five years after Milton.

[2] Avitus was Bishop of Vienne (succeeding his father and grandfather) about 490. His poem, "De Initio

that it is due to a little lurking stimulant of that Original Sin which put bitterness into his Salmasian papers, and an ugly arrogance into his domestic discipline? But, after all, he was every way greater than his forerunners, and can afford to admit Cædmon and Vondel and Avitus, and all other claimants, as supporting columns in the underlying crypt upon which was builded the great temple of his song.

## LAST DAYS

The home of Milton in these latter days of his life was often changed. Now, it was Holborn again; then Jewin Street; then Bunhill Row; and—one while—for a year or more, when the great plague of 1665 desolated the city, he fled before it to the little village of Chalfont, some twenty miles distant from London on the Aylesbury road. There the cottage[1] may still

Mundi," was in Latin hexameters. See interesting account of same in *The Atlantic Monthly* for January, 1890.

[1] The cottage is a half-timber, gable fronted building, and has Milton's name inscribed over the door. The village is reached by a branch of the L. & N. W. R. R. American visitors will also look with interest at the burial place of William Penn, who lies in a "place of graves" behind the Friends' Meeting House—a mile and a half only from Chalfont Church.

be seen in which he lived, and the garden in which he walked—but never saw. There, too, is the latticed window looking on the garden, at which he sat hour by hour, with the summer winds blowing on him from over honeysuckle beds, while he brooded, with sightless eyes turned to the sky, upon the mysteries of fate and foreknowledge.

A young Quaker, Ellwood, perhaps his dearest friend, comes to see him there, to read to him and to give a helping hand to the old man's study; his daughters, too, are at their helpful service; grateful, maybe, that even the desolation of the plague has given a short relief from the dingy house in the town and its treadmill labors, and put the joy of blooming flowers and of singing birds into their withered hearts.

The year after, which finds them in Bunhill Row again, brings that great London fire which the Monument now commemorates; they passing three days and nights upon the edge of that huge tempest of flame and smoke which devoured nearly two-thirds of London; the old poet hearing the din and roar and crackle, and feeling upon his forehead the waves of fierce heat and the showers of cinders—a scene and an experience which might have given, per-

haps, other color to his pictures of Pandemonium, if his great poem had not been just now, in these fateful years, completed—completed and bargained for; £20 were to be paid for it conditionally,[1] in four payments of £5 each, at a day when London had been decimated by the plague, and half the city was a waste of ruin and ashes. And to give an added tint of blackness to the picture, we have to fancy his three daughters leaving him, as they did, tired of tasks, tired of wrangling. Anne, the infirm one, who neither read nor wrote, and Mary, so overworked, and Deborah, the youngest (latterly being very helpful)—all desert him. They never return. "Undutiful daughters," he says to Ellwood; but I think he does not soften toward them, even when gone. Poor, stern, old man! He would have cut them off by will from their small shares of inheritance in his estate; but the courts wisely overruled this. Anne, strangely enough, married—dying shortly after; Mary died years later, a spinster; and Deborah, who became Mrs. Clark, had some notice, thirty years later,

[1] The terms were £5 down; another £5 after sale of 1,300 copies, and two equal sums on further sale of two other editions of same number. The family actually compounded for £18, before the third edition was entirely sold.

when it was discovered that a quiet woman of that name was Milton's daughter. But she seems to have been of a stolid make; no poetry, no high sense of dignity belonging to her; a woman like ten thousand, whose descendants are now said (doubtfully) to be living somewhere in India.

But Milton wrought on; his wife Betty, of whom he spoke more affectionately than ever once of his daughters, humored his poor fagged appetites of the table. *Paradise Regained* was in hand; and later the "Samson Agonistes." His habits were regular; up at five o'clock; a chapter of the Hebrew Bible read to him by his daughter Mary—what time she stayed; an early breakfast, and quiet lonely contemplation after it (his nephew tells us) till seven. Then work came, putting Quaker Ellwood to helpful service, or whoever happened in, and could fathom the reading—this lasting till mid-day dinner; afterward a walk in his garden (when he had one) for two hours, in his old gray suit, in which many a time passers-by saw him sitting at his door. There was singing in later afternoon, when there was a voice to sing for him; and instrumental music, when his, or a friendly hand touched the old organ. After supper, a pipe and a glass of water; always

persistently temperate; and then, night and rest.

He attended no church in his later years, finding none in absolute agreement with his beliefs; sympathizing with the Quakers to a certain degree, with the orthodox Independents too; but flaming up at any procrustean laws for faith; never giving over a certain tender love, I think, for the organ-music and storied splendors of the Anglican Church; but with a wild, broad freedom of thought chafing at any ecclesiastic law made by man, that galled him or checked his longings. His clear, clean intellect—not without its satiric jostlings and wrestlings—its petulancies and caprices—sought and maintained, independently, its own relation with God and the mysterious future.

Our amiable Dr. Channing, with excellent data before him, demonstrated his good Unitarian faith; but though Milton might have approved his nice reasonings, I doubt if he would have gone to church with him. He loved liberty; he could not travel well in double harness, not even in his household or with the elders. His exalted range of vision made light of the little aids and lorgnettes which the conventional teachers held out to him. Creeds and dogmas and vestments and canons, and all hu-

manly consecrated helps, were but Jack-o'-lanterns to him, who was swathed all about with the glowing clouds of glory that rolled in upon his soul from the infinite depths.

In the year 1674—he being then sixty-five years old—on a Sunday, late at night, he died; and with so little pain that those who were with him did not know when the end came. He was buried—not in the great cemetery of Bunhill Fields, close by his house—but beside his father, in the old parish church of St. Giles, Cripplegate, where he had been used to go as a boy, and where he had been used to hear the old burial Office for the Dead—now intoned over his grave—*"Ashes to ashes, dust to dust."*

There was no need for the monument erected to him there in recent years. His poems make a monument that is read of all the world, and will be read in all times of the world.

## CHAPTER V

As we launched upon the days of Charles I., in our last talk, we had somewhat to say of the King's advisers, lay and ecclesiastic; we came to quick sense of the war-clouds, fast gathering, through which Jeremy Taylor shot his flashes of pious eloquence; we heard a strain of Suckling's verse, to which might have been added other, and may be better, from such Royalist singers as Carew or Lovelace;[1] but we cannot swoop all the birds into our net. We had glimpse of the crop-eared Prynne of the *Histriomastix;* and from Cowley, that sincere friend of both King and Queen in the days of their misfortunes, we plucked some "Poetical Blossoms"; also a charming "Rose," from the orderly parterres of that great gardener, and pompous, time-serving man, Edmund Waller.

Then came Milton with the fairy melodies,

[1] Carew, b. about 1589; d. 1639; full of lyrical arts and brazen sensuality. Lovelace, b. 1618; d. 1658; a careless master of song, whom wealth and royal favor did not save from a death of want and despair.

always sweet, of "Comus"—the cantankerous pamphleteering—the soured home-life—the bloody thrusts at the image of the King, and the grander flight of his diviner music into the courts of Paradise.

## CHARLES II. AND HIS FRIENDS

Some fourteen years or so before the death of Milton, the restoration of Charles II. had come about. He had drifted back upon the traces of the stout Oliver Cromwell, and of the feebler Richard Cromwell, on a great tide of British enthusiasm. Independents, Presbyterians, Church of England men, and Papists were all by the ears; and it did seem to many among the shrewdest of even the Puritan workers that some balance-wheel (of whatever metal), though weighted with royal traditions and hereditary privileges, might keep the governmental machinery to the steady working of old days.

So the Second Charles had come back, with a great throwing up of caps all through the London streets; Presbyterians giving him welcome because he was sure to snub the Independents; the Independents giving him welcome because he was sure to snub the Presby-

terians; the Church of England men giving him welcome because he was sure to snub both (as he did); and finally, the Papists giving him high welcome because all other ways their hopes were lean and few.

You know, or should know, what manner of man he was: accomplished—in his way; an expert swordsman; an easy talker—capable of setting a tableful of gentlemen in a roar; telling stories inimitably, and a great many of them; full of grimaces that would have made his fortune on the stage; saying sweetest things, and meaning the worst things; a dare-devil who feared neither God nor man; generous, too—most of all in his cups; and liberal—with other people's money; hating business with all his soul; loving pleasure with all his heart; ready always to do kindness that cost him nothing; laughing at all Puritans and purity; yet winning the maudlin affection of a great many people, and the respect of none.

Notwithstanding all this, the country gentlemen of England, of good blood, who had sniffed scornfully at the scent of the beer-vats which hung about the name of Cromwell, welcomed this clever, swarthy, black-haired, dissolute Prince, who had a pedigree which ran back on the father's side to the royal Bruce of

Scotland, and on the mother's side to the great Clovis, and to the greater Charlemagne.

You will find a good glimpse of this scion of royalty in Scott's story of *Peveril of the Peak*. The novel is by no means one of the great romancer's best; but it is well worth reading for the clear and vivid idea it will give one of the social clashings between the reserves of old Puritanism and the incontinencies of new monarchism; you will find in it an excellent sample of the gruff, stalwart Cromwellian; and another of the hot-tempered, swearing cavalier; and still others of the mincing, scheming, gambling, roystering crew which overran all the purlieus of the court of Charles. Buckingham was there—that second Villiers,[1] of whom I had somewhat to say when the elder Buckingham came up for mention in the days of Charles I.; this younger Villiers running before the elder in all accomplishments and all villainies; courtly; of noble bearing; with daintiest of speeches; a pattern of manly graces; capable of a tender French song, with all his tones in exultant accord with best of court singers, and of a comedy that drew all the playgoers of London to the "Rehearsal"; capable too, of the wickedest of plots and of

[1] George Villiers, b. 1627; d. 1688.

the foulest of lies. And yet this Buckingham was one of the best accredited advisers of the Crown.

To the same court belonged Rochester,[1] his great, fine wig covering a great, fine brain; he writing harmonious verses about—"Nothing" —or worse than nothing; and at the last wheedling Bishop Burnet into the belief that he had changed his courses, and that if he might rise from that ugly deathbed where the good-natured, pompous bishop sought him, he would be enrolled among the moralists. I think it was lucky that he died with such good impulse flashing at the top of his badnesses.

Dorset belonged to this court, with his pretty verselets, and Sedley and Etherege; also the Portsmouth and Lady Castelmaine, and the rest of those venturesome ladies who show their colors of cheek and bosom, even now, in the well-handled paintings of Sir Peter Lely. When you go to Hampton Court you can see these fair and frail beauties by the dozen on the walls of the King William room. Sir Peter Lely[2] was a rare painter, belonging to these times; a great favorite of Charles; and he loved such subjects for his brush; he drew

[1] Earl of Rochester (John Wilmot), b. 1647; d. 1680.

[2] Sir Peter Lely, b. (in Westphalia) 1617; d. 1680.

the delicatest hands that were ever put on canvas—too delicate and too small, unfortunately, to cover the undress of his figures.

But, at the worst, England was not altogether a Pandemonium in those days following upon the Restoration. I think, perhaps, the majority of historians and commentators are disposed to over-color the orgies; it is so easy to make prodigious effects with strong sulphurous tints and blazing vermilions. Certain it is that Taine, in writing of these times, has put an almost malignant touch into his story, blinking the fact that the trail which shows most of corrupting phosphorescence came over the Channel with the new King; forgetting that French breeding was at the bottom of the new tastes, and that French gold made the blazonry of the chariots in which the Jezebels rode on their triumphal way through London to—perdition.

Then, again, English vice is more outspoken and less secretive than that of the over-Channel neighbors. It is now, and has always been true, that when his Satanic majesty takes possession of a man (or a woman), he can cover himself in sweeter and more impenetrable disguise under the pretty perukes and charming millinery of French art than in a homely

British body, out of which the demon horns stick stark through all the wigs and cosmetics that art can put upon a man.

It is worth while for us to remember that in this London, when the elegant Duke of Rochester was beating time with his jewelled hand to a French gallop, Richard Baxter's[1] ever-living *Saints' Rest* was an accredited book, giving consolation to many a poor soul wrestling with the fears of death and of future judgment. It was published, indeed, somewhat earlier; but its author was still wakeful and earnest; and many a time his thin, stooping figure might be seen threading a way through the street crowds to his chapel in Southwark, where delighted listeners came to hear him, almost upon the very spot where Shakespeare, eighty years before, had played in the Globe Theatre.

The eloquent Tillotson, too, in these times—more liberal than Baxter or Doddridge—was writing upon *The Wisdom of Being Religious* and the right *Rule of Faith,* and by his catholicity and clear-headedness winning such favor and renown as to bring him later to the see of Canterbury.

[1] Richard Baxter, b. 1615; d. 1691. His *Saints' Rest* published in 1653 (Lowndes).

I would have you keep in mind, too, that John Milton was still alive—his "Samson Agonistes" not being published until Charles II. had been some twelve years upon the throne—and in quiet seclusion was cultivating and cherishing that serene philosophy which glows along the closing line of his greatest sonnet,

"They also serve who only stand and wait!"

## ANDREW MARVELL

When upon the subject of Milton, I made mention of a certain poet who used to go and see him in his country retirement, and who was also assistant to him in his duties as Latin Secretary to the Council. This was Andrew Marvell,[1] a poet of so true a stamp, and so true a man, that it is needful to know something more of him.

He was son of a preacher at Kingston-upon-Hull (or, by metonomy, Hull) in the north of England. In a very singular way, the occasion of his father's sudden death by drowning (if current tradition may be trusted) was also the

[1] Andrew Marvell, b. 1620; d. 1678. Early edition of *Life and Works* by Cooke, 1726. (Later reprints.) Dr. Grosart also a laborer in this field.

occasion of the young poet's entrance upon greatly improved worldy fortune.

The story of it is this, which I tell to fix his memory better in mind. Opposite his father's home, on the other bank of the Humber, lived a lady with an only daughter, the idol of her mother. This daughter chanced to visit Hull, that she might be present at the baptism of one of Mr. Marvell's children. A tempest came up before night, and the boatmen declared the crossing of the river to be dangerous; but the young lady, with girlish wilfulness insisted, notwithstanding the urgence of Mr. Marvell; who, finding her resolved, went with her; and the sea breaking over the boat both were lost. The despairing mother found what consolation she could in virtually adopting the young Andrew Marvell, and eventually bestowing upon him her whole fortune.

This opened a career to him which he was not slow to follow upon with diligence and steadiness. Well-taught, well-travelled, well-mannered, he went up to London, and was there befriended by those whose friendship insured success. He was liberal in his politics, beautifully tolerant in religious matters, kept a level head through the years of Parliamentary rule, and was esteemed and admired by both Puritans and Royalists. He used a

sharp pen in controversy and wrote many pamphlets, some of which even now might serve as models for incisive speech; he was witty with the wittiest; was caustic, humorous; his pages adrip with classicisms; and he had a delicacy of raillery that amused, and a power of logic that smote heavily, where blows were in order. He was for a long time member of Parliament for Hull, and by his honesties of speech and pen, made himself so obnoxious to the political jackals about Charles's court—that he was said to be in danger again and again of assassination; he finally died under strong (but unfounded) suspicion of poisoning.

Those who knew him described him as "of middling stature, strong set, roundish face, cherry-cheeked, hazel-eyed, brown-haired."[1]

There are dainty poems of his, which should be read, and which are worth remembering. Take this, for instance, from his *Garden,* which was written by him first in Latin, and then rendered thus:

"What wondrous life is this I lead!
Ripe apples drop about my head;
The luscious clusters of a vin
Upon my mouth do crush their wine;

[1] Aubrey.

The nectarine and curious peach
Into my hands themselves do reach;
Stumbling on melons, as I pass,
Ensnared with flowers, I fall on grass.

"Here at the fountain's sliding foot
Or at some fruit-tree's mossy root,
Casting the body's vest aside
My soul into the boughs does glide:
There, like a bird, it sits and sings,
Then whets and claps its silver wings,
And, till prepared for longer flight,
Waves in its plumes the various light."

And this other bit, from his "Appleton House" (Nuneaton), still more full of rural spirit:

"How safe, methinks, and strong behind
These trees, have I encamped my mind,
Where beauty aiming at the heart
Bends in some tree its useless dart,
And where the world no certain shot
Can make, or me it toucheth not.

"Bind me, ye woodbines, in your twines,
Curl me about, ye gadding vines,
And, oh, so close your circles lace
That I may never leave this place!
But, lest your fetters prove too weak

Ere I your silken bondage break,
Do you, O brambles, chain me too,
And, courteous briars, nail me through!"

This is better than Rochester's "Nothing," and has no smack of Nell Gwynne or of Charles's court.

## AUTHOR OF HUDIBRAS

It is altogether a different, and a far less worthy character that I now bring to the notice of the reader. The man is Samuel Butler,[1] and the book *Hudibras*—a jingling, doggerel poem, which at the time of its publication had very great vogue in London, and was the literary sensation of the hour in a court which in those same years[2] had received the great epic of Milton without any noticeable ripple of applause.

For myself, I have no great admiration for *Hudibras,* or for Mr. Samuel Butler. He was witty, and wise in a way, and coarse, and had humor; but he was of a bar-room stamp, and

[1] Samuel Butler, b. 1612; d. 1680. Editions of *Hudibras* (his chief book) are many and multiform; that of Bohn perhaps as good as any. His posthumous works, not much known, were published in 1715. No scholarly editing of his works or life has been done.

[2] *Paradise Lost* appeared 1667; first part of *Hudibras*, 1663; third part not till 1678.

although he could make a great gathering of the court people stretch their sides with laughter, it does not appear that he had any high sense of honor, or much dignity of character.

Mr. Pepys (whose memoirs you have heard of, and of whom we shall have more to tell) says that he bought the book one day in the Strand because everybody was talking of it—which is the only reason a good many people have for buying books; and, he continues—that having dipped into it, without finding much benefit, he sold it next day in the Strand for half-price. But poor Mr. Pepys, in another and later entry, says, "I have bought *Hudibras* again; everybody does talk so much of it;" which is very like Mr. Pepys, and very like a good many other buyers of books.

*Hudibras* is, in fact, a great, coarse, rattling, witty lunge at the stiff-neckedness and the cropped heads of the Puritans, which the roistering fellows about the palace naturally enjoyed immensely. He calls the Presbyterians,

> "Such as do build their faith upon
> The holy text of pike and gun;
> Decide all controversies
> By infallible artillery;

And prove their doctrines orthodox
By apostolic blows and knocks;
Call fire and sword and desolation
A godly, thorough reformation,
Which always must be going on
And still be doing—never done;
As if Religion were intended
For nothing else but to be mended.
A sect whose chief devotion lies
In odd, perverse antipathies,
In falling out with that or this,
And finding somewhat still amiss.

"That with more care keep holyday,
The wrong—than others the right way;
Compound for sins they are inclined to
By damning those they have no mind to.

"The self same thing they will abhor
One way, and long another—for:

"Quarrel with mince-pies and disparage
Their best and dearest friend plum-porridge;
Fat pig and goose itself oppose,
And blaspheme custard thro' the nose."

It is not worth while to tell the story of the poem—which, indeed, its author did not live to complete. Its fable was undoubtedly suggested by the far larger and worthier work of

Cervantes; Hudibras and Ralpho standing in the place of the doughty Knight of La Mancha, and Sancho Panza; but there is a world between the two.

*Hudibras* had also the like honor of suggesting its scheme and measure and jingle to an early American poem—that of *McFingal,* by John Trumbull—in which our compatriot with less of wit and ribaldry, but equal smoothness, and rhythmic zest, did so catch the humor of the Butler work in many of his couplets that even now they pass muster as veritable parts of *Hudibras.*[1]

Samuel Butler was the son of a farmer, over in the pretty Worcestershire region of England; but there was in him little sense of charming ruralities; they never put their treasures into his verse. For sometime he was in the household of one of Cromwell's generals,[2] who

[1] Some of the couplets in the two ran so nearly together as almost to collide. Thus, Butler says:

"He that runs may fight again,
Which he can never do that 's slain."

While Trumbull's couplet *runs* thus:

"He that fights and runs away
May live to fight another day."

[2] This was Sir Samuel Luke of Cople-Wood-End, a Parliamentary leader and a man of probity and distinction, supposed to have been the particular subject of

lived in a stately country-hall a little way out of Bedford; again, he filled some dependency at that stately Ludlow Castle on the borders of Wales—forever associated with the music of Milton's "Comus." It was after the Restoration that he budded out in his anti-Puritan lampoon; but though he pandered to the ruling prejudices of the time, he was not successful in his search for place and emoluments; he quarrelled with those who laughed loudest at his buffoonery and died neglected. His name is to be remembered as that of one of the noticeable men of this epoch, who wrote a poem bristling all through with coarse wit, and whose memory is kept alive more by the stinging couplets which have passed from his pen into common speech than by any high literary merit or true poetic savor. His chief work in verse must be regarded as a happy, witty extravaganza, which caused so riotous a mirth as to be mistaken for valid fame. The poem is a curio of letters—a specimen of literary bric-à-brac—an old, ingeniously enamelled snuff-box, with dirty pictures within the lid.

Butler's lampoon. His own letter-book, however (*Egerton Magazine,* cited by John Brown in his recent *Life of Bunyan,* p. 45), shows him to have been much more a man of the world than was Butler's caricature of a "Colonel."

## SAMUEL PEPYS

I HAD occasion just now to speak of the *Pepys Diary,* and promised later and further talk about its author, whom we now put in focus, and shall pour what light we can upon him.[1]

He was a man of fair personal appearance and great self-approval, the son of a well-to-do London tailor, and fairly educated; but the most piquant memorial of his life at Cambridge University is the "admonition"—which is of record—of his having been on one occasion "scandalously over-served with drink." In his after life in London he escaped the admonitions; but not wholly the "over-service" in ways of eating and drinking.

Pepys was a not far-off kinsman of Lord Sandwich (whom he strongly resembled), and it was through that dignitary's influence that he ultimately came into a very good position in connection with the Admiralty, where he was most intrepid in his examination of tar and

[1] Samuel Pepys—whom those well up in cockney ways of speech persist in calling "Mr. Peps"—was born 1633; died 1703. His *Diary,* running from 1660 to 1669, did not see the light until 1825. Since that date numerous editions have been published; that of Bright, the best. See also Wheatley, *Samuel Pepys and the World he lived in.*

cordage, and brought such close scrutiny to his duties as to make him an admirable official in the Naval Department under Charles II. For this service, however, he would never have been heard of, any more than another straightforward, plodding clerk; nor would he have been heard of for his book about naval matters, which you will hardly find in any library in the country. But he did write a *Diary*, which you will find everywhere.

It is a *Diary* which, beginning in 1660, the first of Charles' reign, covers the ten important succeeding years; within which he saw regicides hung and quartered, and heard the guns of terrific naval battles with the Dutch, and braved all the horrors of the Great Plague from the day when he first saw house-doors with a red cross marked on them, and the words "Lord, have mercy on us!" to the time when ten thousand died in a week, and "little noise was heard, day or night, but tolling of bells." Page after page of his *Diary* is also given to the great fire of the following year—from the Sunday night when he was waked by his maid to see a big light on the back side of Mark Lane, to the following Thursday when two-thirds of the houses and of the churches of London were in ashes.

But Pepys' *Diary* is not so valued for its story of great events as for its daily setting down of little unimportant things—of the plays which he saw acted—of the dust that fell on the theatre-goers from the galleries—of what he bought, and what he conjectured, and what his wife said to him, and what new dresses she had, and how he slept comfortably through the sermon of Dr. So-and-So—just as you and I might have done—never having a thought either that his *Diary* would ever be printed. He wrote it, in fact, in a blind short-hand, which made it lie unnoticed and undetected for a great many years, until at last some prying Cambridge man unriddled his cipher and wrote out and published *Pepys' Diary* to the world. And it is delightful; it is so true and honest, and straightforward, and gossipy; and it throws more light upon the every-day life in London in those days of the Restoration than all the other books ever written.

There have been other diaries which have historic value; there was Hyde, Earl of Clarendon,[1] with some humor and a lordly grace, who wrote a *History of the Rebellion*—more than

[1] Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon, b. 1609; d. 1674. He was a man of large literary qualities, and his *History* is chiefly prized for its portraits.

half diary—with sentences as long as his pages; but it does not compare with Pepys' for flashes of light upon the accidents of life. There was good, earnest, well-meaning John Evelyn,[1] who had a pretty place called Says-Court (inherited through his wife) down at Deptford—which Scott introduces as the residence of Essex in his story of *Kenilworth*—who had beautiful trees and flowers there which he greatly loved. Well, John Evelyn wrote a diary, and a very good one; with perhaps a better description of the great London fire of 1666 in it than you will find anywhere else; he gives us, too, a delightful memorial of his young daughter Mary—who read the Ancients, who spoke French and Italian, who sang like an angel, who was as gentle and loving as she was wise and beautiful—whose death "left him desolate"; but John Evelyn is silent upon a thousand points in respect to which Pepys bristles all over like a gooseberry bush. Dr. Burnet, too, wrote a *History of his Own Times,* bringing great scholarly attainments to its execution, and a tremendous dignity of authorship; and he would certainly have turned up his bishop's nose at mention of Samuel Pepys; yet Pepys is worth a dozen of him for

[1] John Evelyn, b. 1620; d. 1706.

showing the life of that day. He is so simple; he is so true; he is so unthinking; he is the veriest photographer. Hear him for a little—and I take the passages almost at random:

"*November* 9, 1660.—Lay long in bed this morning.

"To the office, and thence to dinner at the Hoope Tavern, given us by Mr. Ady and Mr. Wine the King's fishmonger. Good sport with Mr. Talbot, who eats no sort of fish, and there was nothing else till we sent for a neat's tongue.

"Thence I went to Sir Harry Wright's where my Lord was busy at cards, and so I staid below with Mrs. Carter and Evans, who did give me a lesson upon the lute, till he came down, and having talked with him at the door about his late business of money, I went to my father's, and staid late talking with my father about my sister Poll's coming to live with me—if she would come and be as a servant (which my wife did seem to be pretty willing to do to-day); and he seems to take it very well, and intends to consider of it."

And again:

"Home by coach, notwithstanding this was the first day of the King's proclamation against hackney coaches coming into the streets to stand to be hired; yet I got one to carry me home."

Again:

"11th *November, Lord's Day.*—To church into our new gallery, the first time it was used. There being no woman this day, we sat in the foremost pew, and behind us our servants, and I hope it will not always be so, it not being handsome for our servants to sit so equal with us. Afterward went to my father's, where I found my wife, and there supped; and after supper we walked home, my little boy carrying a link [torch], and Will leading my wife. So home and to prayers and to bed."

Another day, having been to court, he says:

"The Queene, a very little plain old woman, and nothing more in any respect than any ordinary woman. The Princess Henrietta is very pretty, but much below my expectation; and her dressing of herself with her haire frizzed short up to her eares did make her seem so much the less to me. But my wife, standing near her, with two or three black patches on, and well dressed, did seem to me much handsomer than she. Lady Castelmaine not so handsome as once, and begins to decay; which is also my wife's opinion."

One more little extract and I have done:

"*Lord's Day, May 26.* After dinner I, by

water, alone to Westminster to the Parish Church, by which I had the great pleasure of seeing and gazing at a great many very fine women; and what with that, and sleeping, I passed away the time till sermon was done."

Was there ever anything more ingenuous than that? How delightfully sure we are that such writing was never intended for publication!

The great charm of Mr. Pepys and all such diary writing is, that it gives us, by a hundred little gossipy touches, the actual complexion of the times. We have no conventional speech to wrestle with, in order to get at its meaning. The plain white lights of honesty and common-sense—so much better than all the rhetorical prismatic hues—put the actual situation before us; and we have an approach to that realism which the highest art is always struggling to reach. The courtiers in their great, fresh-curled wigs, strut and ogle and prattle before us. We scent the perfumed locks of Peter Lely's ladies, and the eels frying in the kitchen. We see Mr. Samuel Pepys bowing to the Princess Henrietta, and know we shall hear of it if he makes a misstep in backing out of her august presence. How he gloats over that new plush, or moire-antique, that has just come home for

his wife—cost four guineas—which price shocks him a little, and sends him to bed vexed, and makes him think he had better have kept by the old woollen stuff; but, next Lord's day being bright, and she wearing it to St. Margaret's or St. Giles', where he watches her as she sits under the dull fire of the sermon—her face beaming with gratitude, and radiant with red ribbons—he relents, and softens, and is proud and glad, and goes to sleep! This Pepys stands a good chance to outlive Butler, and to outlive Burnet, and to outlive Clarendon, and to outlive John Evelyn.

I may add further to this mention of the old diarist, that at a certain period of his life he became suspected—and without reason—of complicity with the Popish plots (of whose intricacies you will get curious and graphic illustration in *Peveril of the Peak*); and poor Pepys had his period of prisonship like so many others in that day. He also became, at a later time, singularly enough, the President of the Royal Society of England—a Society formed in the course of Charles II.'s reign, and which enrolled such men as Robert Boyle and Sir Isaac Newton in its early days; and which now enrolls the best and worthiest of England's scientists.

I do not think they would elect such a man as Samuel Pepys for President now; yet it would appear that the old gentleman in his long wig and his new coat made a good figure in the chair, and looked wise, and used to have the members down informally at his rooms in York Building, where he made good cheer for them, and broached his best bin of claret. Nor should it be forgotten that Pepys had an appreciative ear for the melodies of Chaucer (like very few in his day), and spurred Dryden to the making of some of his best imitations.

When he died—it was in the early years of the eighteenth century—he left his books, manuscripts, and engravings, which were valuable, to Magdalen College, Cambridge; and there, as I said when we first came upon his name, his famous *Diary,* in short-hand, lay unheard of and unriddled for more than a hundred years.

### A SCIENTIST

Science was making a push for itself in these times. Newton had discovered the law of gravitation before Charles II. died; the King himself was no bad dabbler in chemistry.

Robert Boyle, the son of an Earl, and with all moneyed appliances to help him, was one of

the early promoters and founders of the Royal Society I spoke of; a noticeable man every way in that epoch of the Ethereges and the Buckinghams and the Gwynnes—devoting his fortune to worthy works; estimable in private life; dignified and serene; tall in person and spare—wearing, like every other well-born Londoner, the curled, long-bottomed wig of France, and making sentences in exposition of his thought which were longer and stiffer than his wigs. I give you a sample. He is discussing the eye, and wants to say that it is wonderfully constructed; and this is the way he says it:

"To be told that an eye is the organ of sight, and that this is performed by that faculty of the mind which, from its function, is called visive, will give a man but a sorry account of the instruments and manner of vision itself, or of the knowledge of that Opificer who, as the Scripture speaks, formed the eye; and he that can take up with this easy theory of Vision, will not think it necessary to take the pains to dissect the eyes of animals, nor study the books of mathematicians to understand Vision; and accordingly will have but mean thoughts of the contrivance of the Organ, and the skill of the Artificer, in comparison of the ideas that will be suggested of both

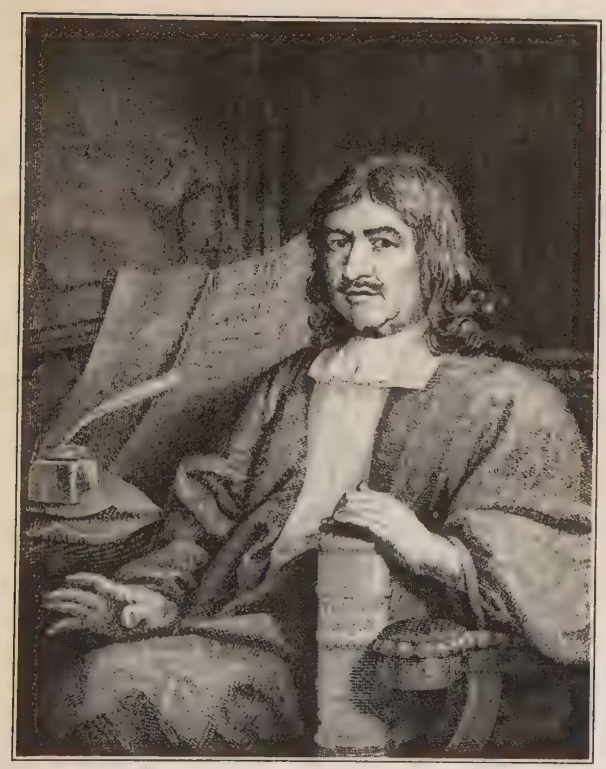
of them to him, that being profoundly skilled in anatomy and optics, by their help takes asunder the several coats, humors, muscles, of which that exquisite dioptrical instrument consists; and having separately considered the size, figure, consistence, texture, diaphaneity or opacity, situation, and connection of each of them, and their coaptation in the whole eye, shall discover, by the help of the laws of optics, how admirably this little organ is fitted to receive the incident beams of light and dispose them in the best manner possible for completing the lively representation of the almost infinitely various objects of sight."

What do you think of that for a sentence? If the Fellows of the Royal Society wrote much in that way (and the Honorable Boyle did a good deal), is it any wonder that they should have an exaggerated respect for a man who could express himself in the short, straight fashion in which Samuel Pepys wrote his *Diary?*

## JOHN BUNYAN

I HAVE a new personage to bring before you out of this hurly-burly of the Restoration days, and what I have to say of him will close up our talk for this morning.

I think he did never wear a wig. Bucking-



John Bunyan
From an engraving by William Sharp

ham, who courted almost all orders of men, would not have honored him with a nod of recognition; nor would Bishop Burnet. I think even the amiable Dr. Tillotson, or the very liberal Dr. South, would have jostled away from him in a crowd, rather than toward him. Yet he was more pious than they; had more humor than Buckingham; and for imaginative power would outrank every man living in that day, unless we except the blind old poet Milton. You will guess easily the name I have in mind: it is John Bunyan.[1] Not a great name then; so vulgar a one indeed that—a good many years later—the amiable poet Cowper spoke of it charily. But it is known now and honored wherever English is spoken.

He was born at Elstow, a mile away from Bedford, amid fat green meadows, beside which in early May long lines of hawthorn hedges are all abloom. You will go straight through that pleasant country in passing from Liverpool to London, if you take, as I counsel you to do, the Midland Railway; and you will see the lovely rural pictures which fell under

[1] B. 1628; d. 1688. Editions of the *Pilgrim's Progress* are innumerable. Southey and Macaulay have dealt with his biography, and in later times Mr. Froude ("English Men of Letters") and John Brown (8vo, London, 1885).

Bunyan's eye as he strolled along beside the hedge-rows, from Elstow—a mile-long road—to the grammar-school at Bedford.

The trees are beautiful thereabout; the grass is as green as emerald; old cottages are mossy and picturesque; gray towers of churches hang out a great wealth of ivy boughs; sleek Durham cattle and trim sheep feed contentedly on the Bedford meadows, and rooks, cawing, gather into flocks and disperse, and glide down singly, or by pairs, into the tops of trees that shade country houses.

The aspects have not changed much in all these years; even the cottage of Bunyan's tinker father is still there, with only a new front upon it. The boy received but little schooling, and that at hap-hazard; but he got much religious teaching from the elders of the Baptist chapel, or from this or that old Puritan villager. A stern doctrinal theology overshadowed all his boyish years, full of threatening, fiery darts, and full of golden streaks of promise.

He was a badish boy—as most boys are; a goodly *quantum* of original sin in him; he says, with his tender conscience, that he was "very bad"; a child of the devil; swearing, sometimes; playing "three old cat" very often;

picking flowers, I dare say, or idly looking at the rooks of a Sunday. Yet I would engage that the Newhaven High School would furnish thirty or forty as bad ones as John Bunyan any day in the year. But he makes good resolves; breaks them again; finally is convicted, but falters; marries young (and, as would seem, foolishly, neither bride nor groom being turned of twenty), and she bringing for sole dower not so much as one dish or spoon, but only two good books—*The Plain Man's Pathway to Heaven* and *The Practice of Piety*.

Even before this he had been drafted for service in the battles which were aflame in England—doubtless fighting for the Commonwealth, as most of his biographers[1] allege. Very probably, too, he was under orders of that Sir Samuel Luke, who lived near by, and who—as I have mentioned—was the butt of much of Samuel Butler's Hudibrastic satire.

Next we hear of him as preacher—not properly sanctioned even by the non-conforming

[1] Mr. Froude ("English men of Letters") entertains an opposite opinion—as do Offor (1862) and Copner (1883). Mr. Brown, however, who is conscientious to a fault, and seems to have been indefatigable in his research, confirms the general opinion entertained by most accredited biographers. See *John Bunyan; his Life, Times, and Work,* by John Brown, chap. iii., p. 45.

authorities—but opening that intense religious talk of his upon whatever and whomsoever would come to hear. Even his friendly Baptist brothers look doubtfully upon his irregularities; but he sees only the great golden cross before him in the skies, and hears only the crackle of the flames in the nethermost depths below. He is bound to save, in what way he can, those who will be saved, and to warn, in fearfullest way, those who will be damned.

Hundreds came to hear this working-man who was so dreadfully in earnest, and who had no more respect for pulpits or liturgies than for preaching-places in the woods. It was not strange that he offended against non-conformist acts, nor strange that, after accession of Charles II. he came to imprisonment for his illegal pieties. This prison-life lasted for some twelve years, in the which he still preached to those who would listen within prison walls, and read his Bible, and wrought at tagged laces (still a great industry of that district) for the support of his family, a separation from whom —most of all from his poor blind daughter Mary—was, he says, like "pulling the flesh from his bones." Over and over in that reach of prison-life he might have been free if he would have promised to abstain from his irregular preachments, or if he would go over

seas to America. But he would not; he could not forbear to warn whomsoever might hear, of the fiery pit, and of the days when the heavens should be opened. He loved not the thought of over-ocean crossing; his duties lay near; and with all his radicalism he never outlived a gracious liking for British kingly traditions, and for such ranking of men and powers as belonged to Levitical story.

Finally, under Charles' Declaration of Indulgence (1672), which was intended more for the benefit of ill-used Romanists than for Non-conformists, Bunyan's prison-doors were laid open, and he went to his old work of preaching in public places. There may have been, as his more recent biographers intimate, a later (1675) short imprisonment;[1] and this, or some portion of the previous prison-life, was certainly passed in that ancient Bedford jail, which, only a few years since, was standing on

[1] Reference is again made to *Life, Etc.,* by John Brown, Minister of the Church at Bunyan Meeting, Bedford. The old popular belief was strong that Bunyan's entire prisonship was served in the jail of the bridge. Well-authenticated accounts, however, of the number of his fellow-prisoners forbid acceptance of this belief.

Froude alludes to the question without settling it; Mr. Brown ingeniously sets forth a theory that explains the traditions, and seems to meet all the facts of the case.

Bedford bridge, hanging over the waters of the river Ouse—whose slow current we shall find flowing again in our story of William Cowper.

And if the whole weight of tradition is not to be distrusted, it was in this little prison over the river, where passers-by might shout a greeting to him—that John Bunyan fell into the dreamy fashioning of that book which has made his name known everywhere, and which has as fixed a place in the great body of English literature as Shakespeare's "Hamlet," or Spenser's *Faery Queene*—I mean the *Pilgrim's Progress.*

But how is it, the reader may ask, that this tinker's son, who had so far forgotten his school learning that his wife had to teach him over again to read and write—how is it that he makes a book which takes hold on the sympathies of all Christendom, and has a literary quality that ranks it with the first of allegories?[1]

[1] There was a *quasi* charge of plagiarism against Bunyan at one time current, and particulars respecting it came to the light some sixty years ago in a correspondence of Robert Southey (who edited the *Major* edition of *Pilgrim's Progress*) with George Offor, Esq., which appears in the *Reminiscences* of Joseph Cottle of Bristol. The allegation was, that Bunyan had

Mr. Pepys told plainly what we wanted him to tell; but he had nothing but those trifles which give a color to every-day life to tell of. If he had undertaken to make a story of a page long, involving imaginative powers, he would have made a failure of it; and if he had tried to be eloquent he would have given himself away deplorably. But this poor *brazier* (as he calls himself in his last will), with not one-fourth of his knowledge of the world, with not one-twentieth of his learning (bald as the old diarist was in this line), with not one-hundredth part of his self-confidence, makes this wonderful and charming book of which we are talking. How was it?

Well, there was, first, the great compelling and informing Christian purpose in him: he was of the Bible all compact; every utterance of it was a vital truth to him; the fire and the brimstone were real; the Almighty fatherhood was real; the cross and the passion were real; the teeming thousands were real, who hustled

taken hints for his allegory from an old Dutch book, *Duyfkens ande Willemynkyns Pilgrimagee* (with five cuts by Bolswert), published at Antwerp in the year 1627. Dr. Southey dismissed the allegation with disdain, after examination of the *Dutch Pilgrimage;* nor do recent editors appear to have counted the charge worthy of refutation.

him on either side and who were pressing on, rank by rank, in the broad road that leads to the City of Destruction. The man who believes such things in the way in which John Bunyan believed them has a tremendous motive power, which will make itself felt in some shape.

Then that limited schooling of his had kept him to a short vocabulary of the sharpest and keenest and most telling words. Rhetoric did not lead him astray after flowers; learning did not tempt him into far-fetched allusions; literary habit had not spoiled his simplicities. And again, and chiefest of all, there was a great imaginative power, coming—not from schools, nor from grammar teachings—but coming as June days come, and which, breathing over his pages with an almost divine afflatus, lifted their sayings into the regions of Poetry.

Therefore and thereby it is that he has fused his thought into such shape as takes hold on human sympathies everywhere, and his characters are all live creatures. All these two hundred and twenty years last past the noble Greatheart has been thwacking away at Giant Grim and thundering on the walls of Doubting Castle with blows we hear; and poor, timid Christian has been just as many years, in the

sight of all of us, making his way through pitfalls and quagmires and Vanity Fairs—hard pressed by Apollyon, and belabored by Giant Despair—on his steady march toward the Delectable Mountains and the river of Death, and the shining shores which lie Beyond.

## CHAPTER VI

THERE were some unsavory names which crept into the opening of our last chapter; but they were sweet in the nostrils of Charles II. Of such were Buckingham, Rochester, Etherege, Dorset, and the Castelmaine. And we made a little moral counterpoise by the naming of Baxter's *Saints' Rest,* and of Tillotson, and of the healthful, noble verse of Andrew Marvell, by which we wished to impress upon our readers the fact that the whole world of England in that day was not given over to French court-dances and to foul-mouthed poets; but that the Puritan leaven was still working, even in literary ways, and that there were men of dignity, knowledge, culture, and rank, who never bowed down to such as the pretty Duchess of Portsmouth.

We had our glimpse of that witty buffoon Samuel Butler, who made clever antics in rhyme; and I think, we listened with a curious eagerness to what Samuel Pepys had to say of his play-going, and of the black patches with

which his pretty wife set forth her beauty. Then came Bunyan, with his great sermonizing in barns and woods, and that far finer sermonizing which in the days of his jailhood took shape in the immortal story of Christian and Great-heart. He died over a grocer's shop, in Snow Hill, London (its site now all effaced by the great Holborn Viaduct), whither he had gone on a preaching bout in the year 1688, only a few months before James II. was driven from his throne. It is worth going out by the City Road—only a short walk from Finsbury Square—to the cemetery of Bunhill Fields, where Bunyan was buried—to see the marble figure of the tinker preacher stretched upon the monument modern admirers have built, and to see Christian toiling below, with his burden strapped to his back.

## THREE GOOD PROSERS

In the course of that old *Pepys' Diary*—out of which we had our regalement—there is several times mention of Thomas Fuller;[1] among others this:

[1] Thomas Fuller, b. 1608; d. 1661. *The Worthies of England* is his best-known book—a reservoir of anecdote and witty comments upon "men and manners."

"I sat down reading in Fuller's *English Worthies;* being much troubled that (though he had some discourse with me about my family and armes) he says nothing at all. But I believe, indeed, our family were never considerable."

Honest Pepys! Shrewd Dr. Fuller, and a man not to be forgotten! He was a "Cavalier parson" through the Civil-War days; was born down in Northamptonshire in the same town where John Dryden, twenty-three years later, first saw the light. He was full of wit, and full of knowledges; people called him—as so many have been and are called—"a walking library"; and his stout figure was to be seen many a time, in the Commonwealth days, striding through Fleet Street, and by Paul's Walk, to Cheapside. There is quaint humor in his books, and quaintness and aptness of language. Coleridge says he was "the most sensible and least prejudiced great man of his time."

Sir Thomas Browne,[1] a doctor, and the

[1] Thomas Browne, b. 1605; d. 1682. Full collection of his works (with Johnson's *Life*), Bohn, 1851. A very charming edition of the *Religio Medici*—so good in print—so full in notes—so convenient to the hand—is that of the "Golden Treasury Series," Macmillan. Nor can I forbear reference to that keen, sympathetic essay on this writer which appears in Walter Pater's *Appreciations,* Macmillan, 1889.

author of the *Religio Medici* and *Urn-Burial,* was another delightful author of the Civil-War times, whose life reached almost through the reign of Charles II.; yet he was not a war man —in matter of kings or of churches. Serenities hung over him in all those times wherein cannon thundered, and traitors (so called) were quartered, and cathedrals despoiled. He loved not great cities. London never magnetized him; but after his thorough continental travel and his doctorate at Leyden, he planted himself in that old, crooked-streeted city of Norwich, in Norfolk; and there, under the shadow of the stupendous mound and Keep (which date from the early Henrys) he built up a home, of which he made a museum—served the sick—reared a family of ten children, and followed those meditative ways of thought which led him through sepulchral urns, and the miracles of growth, and the Holy Scriptures, away from all the "decrees of councils and the niceties of the schools" to the altitudes he reaches in the *Religio Medici.*

I must excerpt something to show the humors of this Norwich doctor, and it shall be this:

"Light that makes things seen makes some things invisible. Were it not for darkness, and the shadow of the earth, the noblest part of Crea-

tion had remained unseen, and the stars in Heaven as invisible as on the Fourth day when they were created above the horizon with the Sun, and there was not an eye to behold them. The greatest mystery of Religion is expressed by adumbration, and in the noblest part of Jewish types we find the Cherubim *shadowing* the Mercy Seat. Life itself is but the Shadow of Death, and souls departed but the Shadows of the Living. The sun itself is but the dark *Simulacrum,* and light but the shadow of God."

If there was no other reason for our love of the best writings of Sir Thomas Browne, it would be for this—that in some scarce distinguishable way he has inoculated our "Elia" of a later day with something very like his own quaint egoisms and as quaint garniture of speech. How Charles Lamb must have enjoyed him, and joyed in the meditation—of a twilight—on the far-reaching, mystic skeins of thought which so keen a reader would ravel out from the stores of the *Urn-Burial!* And with what delighted sanction the later writer permits, here and there, the tender solemnities of the elder to shine through and qualify his own periods; not through imitativeness, conscious or unconscious, but because the juices from the mellow fruitage of the old physician

have been quietly assimilated by the stuttering clerk of the India House, and so his thought burgeons—by very necessity—into that kindred leafage of phrase which lifts and sways in the gentle breezes of his always gentle purpose.

Another name, of a man far less lovable, but perhaps more widely known, is that of Sir William Temple.[1] He was of excellent family, born in London, highly cultivated, and lived all through the reign of Charles II., and much beyond. He represented England, in diplomatic ways, often upon the Continent, and with great success; he negotiated the so-called Triple Alliance; he also brought about that royal marriage of the daughter of the Duke of York (afterward James II.), with William of Orange, and so gave to England that royal couple, William and Mary. He had great dignity; he had wealth; a sort of earlier Edward Everett—as polished and cold and well-meaning and fastidious; looking rather more to the elegance of his speech that to the burden of it;

[1] William Temple, b. 1628; d. 1699. His works, mainly political writings, were published in two volumes folio, 1720; a later edition, 1731, including the Letters of Temple (edited, and as title-page says—published by Jonathan Swift), was dedicated to his Majesty William III.

always making show of Classicism—nothing if not correct; cautious; keeping well out of harm's way, and all pugnacious expressions of opinion; courteous to strong Churchmen; courteous to Papists; bowing low to my Lady Castelmaine; very considerate of Cromwellians who had power; moulding his habit and speech so as to show no ugly angles of opinion anywhere, but only such convenient roundness as would roll along life's level easily to the very end. You will not be in the way of encountering much that he wrote, though he had the reputation in those days, and long after, of writing excellently well. "He was the first writer," said Johnson, "who gave cadence to English prose."

Among his essays is one on "Ancient and Modern Learning," showing the pretensions of a scholastic man, whose assumptions brought about a controversy into which Richard Bentley, a rare young critic, entered, and out of which grew eventually Swift's famous *Battle of the Books.*

Temple also wrote on gardens, with a safer swing for his learning and his taste; traces of what his taste was in such matters are still discernible about his old home of Moor Park, in Surrey. It lies some forty miles from London, on the way to Southampton and the Isle

of Wight, near the old town of Farnham, where there is a venerable bishop's palace worth the seeing; a mile away one may find the terraces of Sir William's old garden, and the mossy dial under which he ordered his heart to be buried. Another interest, moreover, attaches to these Moor Park gardens, which will make them doubly worth a visit. On their terraces and under their trees used to pace and meditate that strange creature Jonathan Swift, who was in his young days a *protégé* or secretary of Sir William Temple; and there, too, in the same shade, and along the same terraces, used to stroll and meditate in different mood, poor Mistress Hester Johnson, the "Stella" of Swift's life-long love-dream.

We shall meet these people again. But I leave Sir William Temple, commending to your attention a delightful little essay of Charles Lamb, in his volume of Elia, upon "The Genteel Style in Writing." It gives a fair though flattering notion of the ways of Sir William's life, and of the way of his work.

## JOHN DRYDEN

Of course we know John Dryden's name a great deal better than we know Sir William Temple's; better, perhaps, than we know any

other name of that period. And yet do we know his poems well? Are there any that you specially cherish and doat upon? any that kindle your sympathies easily into blaze? any that give electric expression to your own poetic yearnings, and put you upon quick and enchanting drift into that empyrean of song whereto the great poets decoy us? I doubt if there is much of Dryden which has this subtle influence upon you; certainly it has not upon me.

There are the great Cecilia odes, which hold their places in the reading-books, with their

> "Double—double—double beat
> Of the thundering drum;"

and the royal

> "Philip's warlike son,
> Aloft in awful state;
> The lovely Thais by his side,
> —Like a blooming Eastern bride
> In flower of youth and beauty's pride;"

all which we read over and over, always with an ambitious vocalism which the language invites, but, I think, with not much hearty unction.

And yet, notwithstanding the little that we recall of this man's work, he did write an enormous amount of verse, in all metres, and of all lengths. All the poems that Milton ever published would hardly fill the space necessary for a full synopsis of what John Dryden wrote. But let us begin at the beginning.

This poet, and important man of letters, was born only a year or two later than John Bunyan, and in the same range of country—a little to the northward, in an old rectory of Aldwinckle (Northamptonshire), upon the banks of the river Nen. And this river flows thence northerly, in great loops, where sedges grow, past the tall spire of Oundle—past the grassy ruins of Fotheringay; and thence easterly, in other great loops, through flat lands, under the huge towers of Peterborough Cathedral. But the river singing among the sedges does not come into Dryden's verse; nor does Fotheringay, with its tragic memories; nor do the noble woods of Lilford Park, or of that Rockingham Forest which, in the days of Dryden's boyhood, must in many places have brought its spurs of oak timber and its haunts of the red-deer close down to the Nen banks. Indeed, Wordsworth says, with a little exaggeration,

it is true, "there is not a single image from nature in the whole body of his [Dryden's] works."

He was a well-born boy, with titled kinsfolk, and had money at command for good courses in books. He was at Westminster School under Dr. Busby; was at Cambridge, where he fell one time into difficulties, which somehow angered him in a way that made him somewhat irreverent of his old college in after life. There are pretty traditions that in extreme youth he addressed some very earnest amatory verses to a certain Helen Driden, daughter of his baronet uncle at Canons-Ashby;[1] and there are hints dropped by some biographers of a rebuff to him; which, if it came about, did not pluck away the cheerfulness and self-approval that lay in him. It was in London, however, where he went after his father's death, and when he was twenty-seven, that the first verse was written by him which made the literary world prick up its ears at sound of a new voice.

'T is in eulogy of Cromwell, dying just then, and this is a bit of it:

[1] This old country home, very charming with its antique air, its mossy terraces, its giant cedars, is still held by a Sir Henry Dryden.

"Swift and resistless thro' the land he past,
Like that bold Greek, who did the East subdue,
And made to battles such heroic haste,
As if on wings of Victory he flew.

"He fought, secure of fortune as of fame:
Still by new maps the island might be shown,
Of conquests, which he strew'd where-e'er he came,
Thick as the galaxy with stars is strown.

"His ashes in a peaceful urn shall rest,
His name, a great example stands, to show
How strangely high endeavors may be blest,
Where piety and valor jointly go."

A short two years after, you will remember, and Charles II. came to his own and was crowned; and how does this eulogist of Cromwell treat his coronation? In a way that is worth our listening to; for, I think, a comparison of the Cromwellian verses with the Carolan eulogy gives us a key to John Dryden's character:

"All eyes you draw, and with the eyes, the heart:
Of your own pomp yourself the greatest part:
Next to the sacred temple you are led,
Where waits a crown for your more sacred head:

The grateful choir their harmony employ,
Not to make greater, but more solemn joy.
Wrapt soft and warm your name is sent on high,
As flames do on the waves of incense fly:
Music herself is lost, in vain she brings
Her choicest notes to praise the best of kings;
Her melting strains in you a tomb have found,
And lie like bees in their own sweetness drown'd."

No wonder that he came ultimately to have the place of Poet-laureate, and thereafter an extra £100 a year with it! No wonder that, with all his cleverness—and it was prodigious—he never did, and never could, win an unsullied reputation for sterling integrity and straightforward purpose.

I know that his latest biographer and advocate, Mr. Saintsbury, whose work you will be very apt to encounter in the little series edited by John Morley, sees poems like those I have cited with other eyes, and fashions out of them an agreeable poetic consistency very honorable to Dryden; but I cannot twist myself so as to view the matter in his way. I think rather of a conscienceless thrifty newspaper, setting forth the average everyday drift of opinion, with a good deal more than everyday skill.

Meantime John Dryden has married, and has married the daughter of an earl; of just how this came about we have not very full record; but there were a great many who wondered why she should marry him; and a good many more, as it appeared, who persisted in wondering why he should marry her. Such wonderments of wondering people overtake a good many matches. It is quite certain that it was not a marriage which went to make a domestic man of him; and I think you will search vainly through his poems for any indication of those home instincts which, like the "melting strains" he flung about King Charles,

"Lie like bees in their own sweetness drown'd."

The only positive worldly good which seemed to come of this marriage was an occasional home at Charlton, in Wiltshire—an estate of the Earl of Berkshire, his father-in-law —where Dryden wrote, shortly after his marriage, his *Annus Mirabilis*, in which he gave to all the notable events of the year 1666 a fillip with his pen; and the odd conceits that lie in a single one of his stanzas keep yet alive a story of the capture by the British of a fleet of Dutch India ships:—

"Amidst whole heaps of spices lights a ball,
And now their odors armed against them fly;
Some preciously by shattered porcelain fall,
And some by aromatic splinters die."

There are three hundred other stanzas in the poem, of the same make and rhythm, telling of fire, of plague, and of battles. I am not sure if anybody reads it nowadays; but if you do—and it is not fatiguing—you will find wonderful word-craft in it, which repeats the din and crash of battle, and paints the smouldering rage and the blazing power of the Great Fire of London in a way which certain boys, I well remember in old school days, thought represented the grand climacteric of poetic diction.

### THE LONDON OF DRYDEN

But let us not forget where we are in our English story; it is London that has been all aflame in that dreadful year of 1666. Thirteen thousand houses have been destroyed, eighty odd churches, and some four hundred acres of ground in the central part of the city have been burned over. The fire had followed swiftly upon the devastating plague of the previous year, which Dryden had gone into Wiltshire to avoid. It is doubtful, indeed, if he

came back soon enough to see the great blaze with his own eyes; "chemical fire," the poet calls it, and it licked up the poison of the plague; but it did not lick up the leprosy of Charles's court. There was a demand for plays, and for plays of a bad sort; and Dryden met the demand. Never was there an author more apt to divine what the public did want, and more full of literary contrivances to meet it. Dryden knew all the purveyors of this sort of intellectual repast, and all their methods, and soon became a king among them; and to be a king among the playwrights was to have a very large sovereignty in that time. Everybody talked of the plays; all of Royalist faith went to the plays, if they had money; and money was becoming more and more plentiful. There had been the set-back, it is true, of the Great Fire; but English commerce was making enormous strides in these days. There was a pathetic folding of the hands and dreary forecastings directly after the disaster, as after all such calamities. But straight upon this the city grew, with wider streets and taller houses, and in only a very few years the waste ground was covered again, and the new temple of St. Paul's rising, under the guidance of Sir Christopher Wren, into those grand proportions of

cupola and dome, which, in their smoked and sooty majesty, dominate the city of London to-day.

Houses of nobles and of rich merchants which stood near to Cornhill and Lombard Street, and private gardens which had occupied areas thereabout—now representing millions of pounds in value—were crowded away westward by the new demands of commerce. In Dryden's day there were ducal houses looking upon Lincoln's Inn Fields; and others, with pleasure grounds about them, close upon Covent Garden Square. Americans go to that neighborhood now, in early morning, to catch sight of the immense stores of fruit and vegetables which are on show there upon market-days; and they are well repaid for such visit; yet the houses are dingy, and a welter of straw and mud and market *débris* stretches to the doors; but the stranger, picking his way through this, and through Russell Street to the corner of Bow Street, will find, close by, the site of that famous Will's Coffee-house, where Dryden lorded it so many years, and whose figure there—in the chimney-corner, with his pipe, laying down the law between the whiffs, and conferring honors by offering a pinch from his snuff-box—Scott has made familiar to the whole world.

It was an earlier sort of club-house, where the news in the *Gazette* was talked of, and the last battle—if there were a recent one—and the last play, and the last scandal of the court. Its discussions and potations made away with a good many nights, and a good many pipes and bottles, and was not largely provocative of domesticity. But it does not appear that the Lady Elizabeth—Dryden's wife—ever made remonstrances on this score; indeed, Mr. Green, the historian, would intimate that my lady had distractions of her own, not altogether wise or worthy; but we prefer to believe the best we can of her.

To this gathering-place at Covent Garden Etherege and Wycherley found their way—all writing men, in fact; even the great Buckingham perhaps—before his quarrel; and Dorset, fellow-member with Dryden, of the Royal Society; maybe Butler too, when he found himself in London; and poor Otway,[1] hoping to meet some one generous enough to pay his

[1] Otway, b. 1631; d. 1685, son of a Sussex clergyman, was author of many poor plays, and of two—"The Orphan" and "Venice Preserved"—sure to live. With much native refinement and extraordinary pathetic power, he went to the bad; was crazed by hopeless love for an actress (Mrs. Barry) in his own plays; plunged thereafter into wildest dissipation, and died destitute and neglected.

score for him; and the young Congreve, proud in his earlier days to get a nod from the great Dryden; and, prouder yet, when, at a later time, he was honored by that tender and pathetic epistle from the Laureate:

"Already I am worn with cares and age,
And just abandoning the ungrateful stage;
But you, whom every muse and grace adorn,
Whom I foresee to better fortune born,
Be kind to my remains; and O defend,
Against your judgment, your departed friend!"

I said that he wrote plays; wrote them by the couple—by the dozen—by the score possibly.

You do not know them; and I hope you never will know them to love them. They have fallen away from literature—never acted, and rarely read. He could not plot a story, and he had not the dramatic gift. One wonders how a theatreful could have listened to their pomposity and inflation and exaggerations. But they did, and they filled Dryden's pockets. There were scenic splendors, indeed, about many of them which delighted the pit, and which the poet loved as accompaniments to the roll of his sonorous verse; there were, too, fragments here and there, with epithet and

characterization that showed his mastership; and sometimes the most graceful of lyrics budded out from the coarse groundwork of the play, as fair in sound as they were foul in thought.

In private intercourse Dryden is represented to have been a man of courteous speech, never low and ribald—as were many of the royal favorites; and when he undertook playwriting to order, to meet the profligate tastes of the court, he could not, like some lesser playwrights, disguise double-meanings and vulgarities under a flimsy veil of courtliness; but by his very sincerity he made all his lewdness rank, and all his indelicacies brutal. This will, and should, I think, keep his plays away from our reading-desks.

Dryden's satires, written later, show a better and far stronger side of his literary quality; and Buckingham, long after his lineaments shall have faded from a mob of histories, will stand preserved as Zimri, in the strong pickle of Dryden's verse; you will have met the picture, perhaps without knowing it for the magnificent courtier, who wrote "The Rehearsal":

"A man so various that he seemed to be
Not one, but all mankind's epitome:

Stiff in opinions, always in the wrong;
Was everything by starts, and nothing long,
But in the course of one revolving moon
Was chymist, fiddler, statesman, and buffoon;
Then all for women, painting, rhyming, drinking,
Besides ten thousand freaks that died in thinking."

A man who writes in that way about a peer of England was liable to write of lesser men in a manner that would stir hot blood; and he did. Once upon a time this great king at "Will's" was waylaid and sorrily cudgelled; which is an experience that—however it may come about—is not elevating in its effects, nor does it increase our sense of a man's dignity; for it is an almost universal fact that the men most worthy of respect, in almost any society, are the men who never do get quietly cudgelled.

### LATER POEMS AND PURPOSE

Far on in 1682, when our Dryden was waxing oldish, and when he had given over play-going for somewhat more of church-going, he wrote, in the same verse with his satires, and with the same ringing couplets of sound, a defence of the moderate liberal churchmanship that does

not yield to ecclesiastic fetters, and that thinks widely. A little later, in 1687, he writes in a more assured vein, assuming bold defence of Romanism—as it existed in that day in England—to which faith he had become a convert. This last is a curiously designed poem, showing how little he had the arts of construction in hand; it is a long argument between a Hind and a Panther, in the shades of a forest. Was ever ecclesiasticism so recommended before? Yet there are brave and unforgetable lines in it: instance the noble rhythm, and the noble burden of that passage beginning—like a trumpet note—

"What weight of ancient witness can prevail,
If private reason hold the public scale?"

And again the fine tribute to "the Church":

"Thus one, thus pure, behold her largely spread,
Like the fair ocean from her mother bed;
From East to West triumphantly she rides;
All shores are watered by her wealthy tides;
The Gospel-sound, diffused from pole to pole
Where winds can carry, and where waves can roll;
The self-same doctrine of the sacred page
Conveyed to every clime, in every age."

I think Bishop Heber had a reverent and a stealthy look upon these lines when he wrote a certain stanza of his "Greenland's icy mountains."

The enemies of Dryden did not fail to observe that between the dates of the two professions of faith named, Charles II. had died, summoning a Papist priest, at the very last, to give him a chance—and, it is feared, a small one—of reconcilement with Heaven; furthermore, these enemies remembered that the bigot James II. had come to the throne, full of Papist zeal and of a poor hope to bring all England to a great somerset of faith. Did Dryden undergo an innocent change? Maybe; may not be. Certainly neither Lord Macaulay, nor Elkanah Settle, nor Saintsbury, nor you, nor I, have the right to go behind the veil of privacy which in such matters is every man's privilege.

How odd it seems that this Papist convert of James II.'s time, and author of so many plays that outranked Etherege in rankness, should have put the *Veni, Creator*, of Charlemagne (if it be his) into such reverent and trenchant English as carries it into so many of our hymnals.

"Creator Spirit, by whose aid
The world's foundations first were laid,

Come, visit every humble mind;
Come, pour thy joys on humankind;
From sin and sorrow set us free,
And make thy temples worthy thee."

Nor was this all of Dryden's translating work. He roamed high and low among all the treasures of the ancients. Theocritus gave his tangle of sweet sounds to him, and Homer his hexameters; Juvenal and Horace and Ovid were turned into his verse; and Dryden's *Virgil* is the only Virgil of thousands of readers. He sought motive, too, in Boccaccio and Chaucer; and within times the oldest of us can remember his "Flower and Leaf" and his "Palamon and Arcite" were more read and known than the poems of like name attributed to Chaucer. But in the newer and more popular renderings and printings of the old English poet, Chaucer has come to his own again, and rings out his tales with a lark-like melody that outgoes in richness and charm all the happy paraphrases of Dryden.

A still more dangerous task our poet undertook in the days of his dramatic work. I have in my library some half dozen of Dryden's plays—yellowed and tattered, and of the imprint of 1710 or thereabout—and among them is one bearing this title, *The Tempest, originally written by William Shakespeare, and*

*altered and improved by John Dryden;* and the story of Antony and Cleopatra underwent the same sort of improvement—dangerous work for Dryden; dangerous for any of us. And yet this latter, under name of "All for Love," was one of Dryden's greatest successes, and reckoned by many dramatic critics of that day far superior to Shakespeare.

One more extract from this voluminous poet and we shall leave him; it was written when he was well toward sixty, and when his dramatic experiences were virtually ended; it is from an ode in memory of Mistress Killigrew, a friend and a poetess. In the course of it he makes honest bewailment, into which it would seem his whole heart entered:

"O gracious God! how far have we
Profaned thy heavenly gift of Poesy?
Made prostitute and profligate the muse,
Debased to each obscene and impious use,
Whose harmony was first ordained above
For tongues of angels, and for hymns of love?"

And again, a verselet that is full of all his most characteristic manner:

"When in mid-air the golden trump shall sound,
To raise the nations under ground;

When in the Valley of Jehoshaphat,
The judging God shall close the book of Fate;
And there the last assizes keep,
For those who wake and those who sleep:
When rattling bones together fly,
From the four corners of the sky;
When sinews o'er the skeletons are spread,
Those clothed with flesh, and life inspires the dead;
The sacred poets first shall hear the sound,
And foremost from the tomb shall bound,
For they are covered with the lightest ground;
And straight, with inborn vigor, on the wing,
Like mounting larks, to the new morning sing.
Then thou, sweet Saint, before the quire shall go,
As Harbinger of Heaven, the way to show,
The way which thou so well hast learnt below!"

We have given much space to our talk about Dryden. Is it because we like him so well? By no means. It is because he was the greatest master among the literary craftsmen of his day; it is because he wrought in so many and various forms, and always with a steady, unflinching capacity for toil, which knew no shake or pause; it is because he had a marvellously keen sense for all the symphonies of heroic language, and could always cheat and charm the ear with his reverberant thunders;

it is because he spanned a great interval of English letters, covering it with various accomplishment; criticising keenly, and accepted as a critic; judging fairly, and accepted as a judge in the great court of language; teaching, by his example, of uses and fashions of use, which were heeded by his contemporaries, and which put younger men upon the track of better and worthier achievement.

Again, it is because he, more than any other of his epoch, represented in himself and in what he wrought, the drift and bent and actualities of the time. There were changes of dynasties, and he put into language, for all England, the lamentation over the old and the glorification of the new; there were plagues and conflagrations and upbuildings of desolated cities—and the fumes and the flames and the din of all these get speech of him, and such color as put them in undying record upon the roll of history; there were changes of faith, and vague out-reaches for some sure ground of religious establishment—and his poems tell of the struggle, and in his own personality represent the stress of a whole nation's doubts; there are battles raging round the coasts—and the echo of them, in some shape of trumpet blare or shrill military resonance, seems never

to go out of his poems; dissoluteness rules in the court and in the city, infecting all—and Dryden wallows with them through a score of his uncanny dramas.

Put his poems together in the order of their composition, and without any other historic data whatever, they would show the changes and quavers and sudden enthusiasms and bestialities and doubts and growth of the National Life. But they would most rarely show the noble impulses that kindle hope and foretoken better things to come—rarely the elevating purpose that commands our reverence.

No fictitious character of his is a live one to-day; you can hardly recall one if you try.[1] No couplet or verselet of his is so freighted with a serene or hopeful philosophy as to make our march the blither by reason of it down the corridors of time. No blast of all his fanfaron of trumpets sounds the opening of the gates upon any Delectable Mountains. A great, clever, literary worker! I think that is all we can say of him. And when you or I pass under his monument in the corner of Westminster Abbey, we will stand bowed respectfully, but not with any such veneration, I

[1] Shall I except his re-telling of the tale of Cymon and "Iphigene the Fair?"

think, as we expect to carry to the tomb of Milton or of Chaucer; and if one falls on Pope —what then? I think we might pause—waver; more polish here—more power there —the humanities not radiant in either; and so we might safely sidle away to warm ourselves before the cenotaph of Goldsmith.

## JOHN LOCKE

ANOTHER man who grew up in these times in England, and who from his study-window at Oxford (where he had been Lecturer on Rhetoric) saw the Great Fire of London in the shape of a vast, yellow, sulphurous-looking cloud, of portentous aspect, rolling toward the zenith, and covering half the sky, was Mr. John Locke.[1]

We are too apt, I think, to dismiss this author from our thoughts as a man full only of dreary metaphysic subtleties; and support the belief with the story that our Jonathan Edwards read his treatise on the *Human Understanding* with great delight at the age of

[1] John Locke, b. 1632; d. 1704. The best edition of Locke's works is said to be that by Bishop Law, four volumes, 4to, 1777. For Life, Fox Bourne (1876) is latest authority.

fourteen. Yet Locke, although a man of the keenest and rarest intellect—which almost etherealized his looks—was possessed of a wonderful deal of what he would have called "hard, round-about sense;" indeed it would be quite possible to fill a whole calendar with bits of his printed talk that would be as pitpat and common-sensical as anything in *Poor Richard's Almanac*. Moreover, he could, on occasions, tell a neat and droll story, which would set the "table in a roar."

Some facts in the life of this great thinker and writer are worth our remembering, not only by reason of the fame of his books, but because in all those years whose turbulent rush and corrupting influences have shown themselves in our pages, John Locke lived an upright, manly, self-respecting life, though brought into intimate relations with many most prominent at court. He was born in Western England, north of the Mendip Hills; and after fourteen years of quiet country life, and kind parental training, among the orchard slopes of Somersetshire, went to Westminster School; was many years thereafter at Oxford; studied medicine; met Lord Ashley (afterward the great Shaftesbury—first party-leader in English parliamentary history), who was

so taken by the pale, intellectual face of the young Doctor that he carried him off to London, and domiciled him in his great house upon the Strand. There Locke directed the studies of Ashley's son; and presently—such was my Lord's confidence in him—was solicited to find a wife for the young gentleman;[1] which he did, to the great acceptance of all parties, by taking him off into Rutlandshire, and introducing him to a pretty daughter of the Earl of Rutland. Fancy the author of an *Essay Concerning the Human Understanding* setting off in a coach, with six long-tailed Flemish horses, for a four days' journey into the north of England—with a young scion of the Ashleys—upon such an errand as that! Our doctors in metaphysics do not, I believe, engage in similar service; yet I suppose nice observation would disclose great and curious mental activities in the evolution of such schemes.

The philosopher must have known Dryden, both being early members of the Royal Society; but I have a fancy that Locke was a man who did not—save on rarest occasions—take a pipe and a mug at such a place as Will's Coffee-

[1] This was a weak scion of the house, "born a shapeless lump, like anarchy," as Dryden savagely says; but —by this very match—he became the father of the brilliant author of the *Characteristics* (1711).

house. His tastes led him more to banquets at Exeter House. There was foreign travel, also, in which he accomplished himself in continental languages and socialities; he had offers of diplomatic preferment, but his doubtful health (always making him what over-well people call a fussy man) forbade acceptance; else we might have had in him another Sir William Temple. Shaftesbury interested him in his scheme of new planting the Carolina colony in America; and John Locke drew up rules for its political guidance. Some of these sound very drolly now. Thus—no man was to be a freeman of Carolina unless he acknowledged a God, and agreed that he was to be publicly and solemnly worshipped. The members of one church were not to molest or persecute those of another. Again, "no one shall be permitted to plead before a court of justice for money or reward." What a howling desert this would make of most of our courts!

Again, he writes with great zest upon the subject of Education, and almost with the warmth of that old Roger Ascham, whose maxims I cited in one of our earlier talks:

"Till you can find a school wherein it is possible for the master to look after the manners of

his scholars, and can show as great effects of his care of forming their minds to virtue, and their carriage to good breeding, as of forming their tongues to the learned languages, you must confess that you have a strange value for words, to hazard your sons' innocence and virtue for a little Greek and Latin."

And again:

"I know not why anyone should waste his time and beat his head about the Latin grammar, who does not intend to be a critic, or make speeches, and write despatches in it. If his use of it be only to understand some books writ in it without a critical knowledge of the tongue itself, reading alone will attain his end, without charging his mind with the multiplied rules and intricacies of grammar." . . .

"If there may be any reasons against children's making Latin themes at school, I have much more to say and of more weight against their making verses—verses of any sort. For if he has no genius to poetry, 't is the most unreasonable thing in the world to torment a child, and waste his time about that which can never succeed: and if he have a poetic vein—methinks the parents should labor to have it stifled: for if he proves a successful rhymer, and get once the reputation of a wit, I desire it may be considered

what company and places he is likely to spend his time in—nay, and his estate too."

By which I am more than ever convinced that Locke did not sup often with Dryden at "Will's," and that you will find no pleasant verselets—look as hard as you may—on a single page of his discourse on the *Human Understanding*.

When Charles grew suspicious of Shaftesbury, and the Earl was shorn of his power, no little of the odium fell upon his *protégé;* and for a time there was an enforced—or at least a very prudent—exile for Locke, at one time in France and at another in Holland. It was on these absences that his pen was busiest. In 1689 he returned to England in the trail of William III.; came to new honors under that monarch; published his great work, which had been simmering in his brain for ten years or more; made a great fame at home and abroad, and wrote wisely on many topics. Meanwhile his old enemy, the asthma, was afflicting him sorely. London smoke was a torture to him; but when he went only so little distance away (twenty miles northward) as the country home of his friends Sir Francis and Lady Masham, a delightful calm came to him. He was given his own apartment there; never did

hosts more enjoy a guest; and never a guest enjoyed more the immunities and kindnesses which Sir Francis and Lady bestowed upon him. Twelve or fourteen years of idyllic life for the philosopher followed, in the wooded alleys and upon the charming lawns of the old manor-house of Oates, in the county of Essex; there were leisurely, coy journeys to London; there were welcoming visits from old friends; there was music indoors, and music—of the birds—without. Bachelors rarely come to those quietudes and joys of a home-life which befell the old age of Locke, and equipped all his latter days with such serenities as were a foretaste of heaven.

He does not lie in Westminster Abbey: I think he would have rebelled among the poets: he sleeps more quietly in the pretty churchyard of High-Lavor, a little way off, northward, from the New Park of Epping Forest.

## END OF THE KING AND OTHERS

The lives of these two men—Dryden and Locke—have brought us past the whole reach of Charles II.'s reign. That ignoble monarch has met his fate courageously; some days before the immediate end he knew it was coming, and had kind words for those about him

He died on a Friday,[1] and on the Sunday before had held great revel in the famous gallery of Whitehall; next day came the warnings, and then the blow—paralytic, or other such—which shrivelled his showy powers, and brought his swarthy face to a whiteness and a death-like pallor that shocked those gay people who belonged in the palace. Then came the scourging with hot iron, and the administration of I know not what foul drugs that belonged to the blind medication of that day—all in vain; there were suspicions of poison; but the poison he died of was of his own making, and he had been taking it ever since boyhood.

A Catholic priest came to him stealthily and made the last promises to him he was ever to hear. To a courtier, who came again and again, he apologized—showing his courtesy to the last. "I 'm an awful time in dying," he said; and to somebody else—his brother, perhaps—"don't let poor Nell Gwynne starve;" and so died.

James, the successor, was not loved—scarce by anyone; bigoted, obstinate, selfish, he ran quickly through the short race of which the histories will tell you. Only three years of it,

[1] February 6, 1685.

or thereabout, and then—*presto!* like the changing of the scenes at Drury Lane Theatre in one of the splendid spectacles of the day—James scuds away, and Cousin William (with his wife Mary, both of the blood royal of England) comes in, and sets up a fashion of rule, and an assured Protestant succession of regal names which is not ended yet.

And now, in closing this talk, I will summon into presence once again some of the notable personages who have given intellectual flavor to the years we have gone over, and will call the roll of a few new names among those actors who are to take in swift succession the places of those who disappear. At the date where we now are—1688—the date of the last English Revolution (who, pray, can predict the next?), the date of John Bunyan's death, the date of Alexander Pope's birth—excellent remembrancers, these!—at this epoch, I say, of the incoming of William and Mary, all those dramatic writers—of whom we made mention as having put a little tangled fringe of splendor about the great broidery of Shakespeare's work—were gone. So was Herrick, with his sweet poems, and his pigs and tankards; and Howell, and Wotton, and the saintly George Herbert, and dear, good, old Izaak

Walton—all comfortably dead and buried. So were Andrew Marvell, and the author of *Hudibras*. Archbishop Laud was gone long since to the scaffold, with the fullest acquiescence of all New Englanders; Jeremy Taylor gone—if ever man had right of way there—to heaven; Milton dead; Cowley dead; Waller dead.

Old, ear-cropped Prynne, of the *Histriomastix*, was still living—close upon seventy—grim and gray, and as pugnacious as a bull-terrier. Among others lingering upon the downhill side of life were Robert Boyle and that John Evelyn, whose love of the fields and gardens and trees had put long life in his blood and brain. Sir William Temple, too, had still some years of elegant distinction to coquet with; our old friend of the Pep-sian journal was yet alert—his political ambitions active, his eye-sight failing—never thinking, we may be sure, that his pot-luck of a *Diary* would keep him more savory with us to-day than all his wigs and his coaches, and his fine acquaintance, and his great store of bric-à-brac.

Isaac Newton was not fifty yet, but had somehow lost that elasticity and searchingness of brain which had untwisted the sunbeams, and solved the riddle of gravitation. Bishop

Burnet, and that William Penn whose name ought to hold place on any American file of England's worthies, were in the full vigor of middle age. Daniel De Foe was some eight and twenty, and known only as a sharp trader, who had written a few pamphlets, and who was enrolled in those soldier ranks which went to greet William III. on his arrival at Torbay.

Matthew Prior was still younger, and had made no show of those graces and that art which gave him later an ambassador's place, and a tomb and monument in the "Poet's Corner" of the Abbey. Jonathan Swift, then scarce twenty-one, is unheard of as yet, and is nursing quietly the power and the bitterness with which, through two succeeding reigns, he is to write and rave and rage.

Still more youthful are those two promising lads, Addison and Steele, listening with their sharp young ears to the fine verses of Mr. Dryden, and watching and waiting for the day when they, too, shall say somewhat to be of record for ages after them. And so, with these bright young fellows at the front, and the excellent gray-heads I have named at the rear, we ring down the curtain upon our present entertainment with an "*Exeunt omnes!*"

## CHAPTER VII

I HAVE a fear that my readers were not overmuch interested in what I had to say of that witty Dr. Thomas Fuller who wrote about the *Worthies of England*, and who pressed his stalwart figure (for he was of the bigness of our own Phillips Brooks—corporeal and mental) through many a London crowd that came to his preachments. Yet his worthiness is something larger than that which comes from his story of the *Worthies*.

Sir William Temple, too, is a name that can hardly have provoked much enthusiasm, unless among those who love gardens, and who recall with rural unction his horticultural experiences at Sheen, and at Moor Park in Surrey. But that kindly, handsome, meditative, eccentric doctor of Norwich—Sir Thomas Browne—was of a different and more lovable quality, the memory of which I hope may find lodgement in the reader's heart. His *Religio Medici*, if not his *Hydriotaphia*, should surely find place in every well-appointed library.

As for John Dryden—do what you like with

his books; but do not forget that he left behind him writings that show all the colors and reflect all the follies and faiths of the days in which he lived—plays with a portentous pomp of language—lyrics that were most melodious and most unsavory—satire that flashed and cut like a sword, and odes that had the roll and swell of martial music in them.

John Locke if less known, was worthier; and we have reason, which I tried to show, for thinking of him as a pure-hearted, level-headed, high-minded man—an abiding honor to his race.

## KINGS CHARLES, JAMES, AND WILLIAM

It may help the reader to keep in memory the sequence of these English sovereigns if I tell him somewhat of their relationship. James II. —previously and longer known as that Duke of York, in honor of whom our metropolitan city (in those days conquered from the Dutch) was called New York—we know as only brother to Charles II., who died without legitimate children. This James was as bigoted and obstinate as Charles was profligate and suave. We think of him as having lost his throne in that revolution of 1688, by reason of

his popish tendencies; but it is doubtful if Protestantism would have saved him, or made a better man of him. He had married—and it was a marriage he tried hard to abjure and escape from—a daughter of that Earl of Clarendon whose *History of the Rebellion* I named to you. There were two daughters by this marriage, Mary and Anne; both of them, through the influence of their Clarendon grandfather, brought up as Protestants. The elder of these, Mary, was a fine woman, tall, dignified, graceful, cultivated—as times went—whose greatest foible was a love for cards, at which she played for heavy stakes, and—often. Her sister Anne shared the same foible, and gave it cherishment all her life; but was not reckoned the equal of her elder sister; had none of her grace; was short, dumpy, overfond of good dinners, and with such limited culture as made her notelets (even when she came to be Queen) full of blunders that would put a school-mistress of our day into spasms. We shall meet her, and more pleasantly, again.

But Mary—heir next after James to the throne—had married William of Orange, who was a fighting Dutch general; keen, cool, selfish, brave, calculating, with an excellent head for business; cruel at times, unscrupulous, too,

but a good Protestant. He was great-grandson to that famous William the Silent, whose story everyone has read, or should read, in the pages of Motley.

But how came he, a Dutchman, and speaking English brokenly, to share the British throne with Mary? There were two very excellent reasons: First, he was own cousin to Mary, his mother having been a daughter of Charles I.; and next, he had kingly notions of husbandship, and refused to go to England on any throne-seeking errand, which might involve hard fighting, without sharing to the full the sovereignty of his wife Mary.

So he did go as conqueror and king; there being most easy march to London; the political scene changing like the turn of a kaleidoscope; but there came fighting in Ireland, as at Londonderry and the battle of the Boyne; and a brooding unrest in Scotland, of which, whenever you come to read or study, you should mate your reading with that charming story of *Old Mortality*—one of the best of Scott's. Its scene reaches over from the days of Charles II. to the early years of the Dutch King William, and sets before one more vividly than any history all those elements of unrest with which the new sovereign had to

contend on his northern borders—the crazy fanaticism of fierce Cameronians—the sturdy, cantankerous zeal of Presbyterians—the workings of the old, hot, obstinate leaven of Prelacy, and the romantic, lingering loyalty to a Stuart king.

But William ended by having all his kingdom well in hand, and all his household too. There was strong affection between William and Mary; he relishing her discretion, her reserves, and her culture; and she loving enough to forget the harsh gauntleted hand which he put upon those who were nearest and dearest to him. He was more military than diplomatic, and I think believed in no Scripture more devoutly than in that which sets forth the mandate, "Wives, obey your husbands."

The King was not a strong man physically, though a capital soldier; he was short, awkward, halting in movement, appearing best in the saddle and with battle flaming in his front; he had asthma, too, fearfully; was irritable—full of coughs and colds—building a new palace upon the flank of Hampton Court, to get outside of London smoke and fogs; setting out trees there, and digging ponds in Dutch style, which you may see now; building Ken-

sington, too, which was then out of town, and planting and digging there—of which you may see results over the mouldy brick wall that still hems in that old abode of royalty. He carried his asthma, and dyspepsia, and smoking Dutch dragoons to both places. People thought surely that the Queen, so well made and blessed with wonderful appetite, would outlive him, and so give to the history of England a Mary II.; but she did not. An attack of small-pox, not combated in those days by vaccination, or even inoculation, carried her off on a short illness.

He grieved, as people thought so stern a master could not grieve; but rallied and built to the Queen's memory that most magnificent of monuments, Greenwich Hospital, which shows its domes and its royal façade, stretching along the river bank, to the myriad of strangers who every year sail up or down the Thames.

He made friends, too, with Princess Anne, the sister of the dead Queen, and now heir to the throne. This Princess Anne (afterward Queen Anne) was married to a prince of Denmark, only notable for doing nothing excellently well; and was mother of a young lad, called Duke of Gloucester, whom all England

looked upon as their future king. And this little Duke, after Queen Mary's death, came to be presented at court in a blue velvet costume, blazing all over with diamonds, of which one may get a good notion from Sir Godfrey Kneller's painting of him, now in Hampton Court. But the velvet and the diamonds and best of care could not save the weakly, blue-eyed, fair-cheeked, precocious lad; his precocity was a fatal one, due to a big hydrocephalic head that bent him down and carried him to the grave while William was yet King.

The Princess mother was in despair; was herself feeble, too; small, heavy, dropsical, from all which she rallied, however, and at the death of William, which occurred by a fall from his horse in 1702, came to be that Queen Anne, who through no special virtues of her own, gave a name to a great epoch in English history, and in these latter days has given a name to very much architecture and furniture and crockery, which have as little to do with her as they have with our King Benjamin of Washington.

I may have more to say of her when we shall have brought the literary current of our story more nearly abreast of her times.

There was not much of literary patronage

flowing out from King William. I think there was never a time when he would not have counted a good dictionary the best of books, not excepting the Bible; and I suspect that he had about the same contempt for "literary fellers" which belongs to our average Congressman. Yet there were shoals of poets in his time who would have delighted to burn incense under the nostrils of the asthmatic King.

### SOME LITERARY FELLOWS

THERE was Prior,[1] for instance, who, from having been the son of a taverner at Whitehall, came to be a polished wit, and at last an ambassador, through the influence of strong friends about the court. In his university days he had ventured to ridicule, in rattling verse, the utterances of the great Dryden. You will know of him best, perhaps, if you know him at all, by a paraphrase he made of that tender ballad of the "Nut-brown Maid," in which the charming naturalness of the old verse is stuck over with the black patches of Prior's pretty rhetoric. But I am tempted to give you a fairer and a more characteristic specimen of his vivacity and grace. Here it is:

[1] Matthew Prior, b. 1664; d. 1721.

"What I speak, my fair Chloe, and what I write,
shows
The difference there is betwixt nature and art;
I court *others* in verse; but I love *thee* in prose;
And *they* have my whimsies, but *thou* hast my
heart.
So when I am wearied with wandering all day,
To thee, my delight, in the evening I come,
No matter what beauties I saw in my way;
They were but my *visits,* and thou art my
home."

Remember, these lines were written by a poet, who on an important occasion represented the Government of Queen Anne at the great court of Louis XIV. of France. This Prior—when Queen Mary died—had his consolatory verses for King William. Indeed that death of Queen Mary set a great deal of poetry upon the flow. There was William Congreve,[1] who though a young man, not yet turned of thirty, had won a great rank in those days by his witty comedies. He wrote a pastoral—cleaner than most of his writing—in honor of William's lost Queen:

"No more these woods shall with her sight be
blest,
Nor with her feet these flowery plains be prest;

[1] William Congreve, b. 1670; d. 1729. See edition of his dramatic works, with pleasant introduction by Leigh Hunt (1840).

No more the winds shall with her tresses play,
And from her balmy breath steal sweets away.
Oh, she was heavenly fair, in face and mind,
Never in nature were such beauties joined;
Without—all shining, and within—all white;
Pure to the sense, and pleasing to the sight;
Like some rare flower, whose leaves all colors
yield,
And—opening—is with sweetest odors filled."

Yet all this would have comforted the King not half so much as a whiff of smoke from the pipe of one of his Dutch dragoons. He never went to see one of Mr. Congreve's plays, though the whole town was talking of their neatness, and their skill, and their wit. That clever gentleman's conquests on the stage, and in the social world—lording it as he did among duchesses and countesses—would have weighed with King William not so much as the buzzing of a blue-bottle fly.

Yet Congreve was in his way an important man—immensely admired; Voltaire said he was the best comedy writer England had ever known; and when he came to London this keen-witted Frenchman (who rarely visited) went to see Mr. Congreve at his rooms in the Strand. Nothing was too good for Mr. Congreve; he had patronage and great gifts; it

seemed always to be raining roses on his head. The work he did was not great work, but it was exquisitely done; though, it must be said, there was no preserving savor in it but the art of it. The talk in his comedies, by its pliancy, grace, neat turns, swiftness of repartee, compares with the talk in most comedies as goldsmith's work compares with the heavy forgings of a blacksmith. It matches exquisitely part to part, and runs as delicately as a hair-spring on jewelled pinions.

I gave my readers a bit of the "Pandora Lament," which Sir Richard Steele thought one of the most perfect of all pastoral compositions. And the little whimsey about Amoret, everybody knows; certainly it is best known of all he did:

"Coquet and coy at once her air,
Both studied, tho' both seemed neglected;
Careless she is with artful care,
Affecting to seem unaffected.
With skill her eyes dart every glance,
Yet change so soon, you 'd ne'er suspect 'em,
For she 'd persuade they wound by chance,
Tho' certain aim and art direct them."

They are very pretty; yet are you not sure that our wheezing, phlegmatic, business-loving,

Dutch King William would have sniffed contemptuously at the reading of any such verselets?

### A PAMPHLETEER

A WRITER, however, of that time, of about the same age with Congreve, whom King William did favor, and did take at one period into his confidence,—and one of whose books, at least, you all have liked at some epoch of your life, and thought quite wonderful and charming—I must tell you more about. His presence counted for nothing; he was short, wiry, hook-nosed—not anyway elegant; Mr. Congreve would have scorned association with him. He was the son of a small butcher in London, and had never much schooling; but he was quick of apprehension, always eager to inform himself; bustling, shrewd, inquisitive, with abundance of what we call "cheek." He never lacked simple, strong language to tell just what he thought, or what he knew; and he never lacked the courage to put his language into print or into speech, as the case might be.

By dint of his dogged perseverance and much natural aptitude he came to know Latin and Spanish and Italian, and could speak French, such as it was, very fluently. He was

well up in geography and history, and such science as went into the books of those days. He wrote sharp, stinging pamphlets about whatever struck him as wrong, or as wanting a good slap, whether in morals, manners, or politics.

He was in trade, which took him sometimes into France, Spain, or Flanders. He could tell everyone how to make money and how to conduct business better than he could do either himself. He had his bankruptcies, his hidings, his compoundings with creditors, and his times in prison; but he came out of all these experiences with just as much animation and pluck and assurance as he carried into them.

There was a time when he was advertised as a fugitive, and a reward offered for his apprehension—all due to his sharp pamphlet-writing; and he was apprehended and had his fines to pay, and stood in the pillory; but the street-folk, with a love for his pluck and for his trenchant, homely, outspokenness, garnished the pillory with flowers and garlands. It was this power of incisive speech, and his capacity to win audience of the street-people, that made King William value his gifts and put them to service.

But I cannot tell of the half he wrote. Now

it was upon management of families; again an *Essay on Projects*—from which Dr. Franklin used to say he derived a great many valuable hints—then upon a standing army; then upon the villainies of stock-jobbery. What he called poems, too, he wrote, with a harsh jingle of rhymes; one specially, showing that—

"as the world goes, and is like to go, the best way for Ladies is to keep unmarried, for I will ever expose," he says, "these infamous, impertinent, cowardly, censorious, sauntering *Idle wretches,* called *Wits* and *Beaux,* the *Plague* of the nation and the *Scandal* of mankind. But," he continues, "if Lesbia is sure she has found a man of *Honor, Religion* and *Virtue,* I will never forbid the *Banns:* Let her love him as much as she pleases, and value him as an *Angel,* and be married tomorrow if she will."

Again, he has a whole volume of *Advice to English Tradesmen,* as to how to manage their shops and bargainings; and it gives one a curious notion of what was counted idle extravagance in that day to read his description of the extraordinary and absurd expenditure of a certain insane pastry-cook:

"It will hardly be believed," he says, "in ages to come, that the fitting of his shop has cost

300 pounds! I have good authority for saying that this spendthrift has sash-windows all of looking-glass plate twelve inches by sixteen—two large pier looking-glasses, and one very large pier-glass seven feet high; and all the walls of the shop are lined up with galley tiles."

He advises a young apothecary who has not large acquaintance to hire a stout man to pound in a big mortar (though he may have nothing to pound) all the early hours of the morning, and all the evening, as if he were a man of great practice. Then, in his *Family Instructor*, he advises against untruth and all hypocrisies; and he compresses sharp pamphlets into the shape of a leading article—is, in fact, the first man to design "leading articles," which he puts into his *Review* or *Indicator*, in which periodicals he saves a corner for well-spiced gossip and scandal, to make—he says—the "paper relished by housewives." He interviews all the cut-throats and thieves encountered in prison, and tells stories of their lives. I think he was the first and best of all interviewers; but not the last! Fifty of these pages of mine would scarce take in the mere titles of the books and pamphlets he wrote. His career stretched far down throughout Queen Anne's days, and was parallel with that

of many worthy men of letters, I shall have to mention; yet he knew familiarly none of them. Swift, who knew everybody he thought worth knowing, speaks of him as an illiterate fellow, whose name he has forgotten; and our pamphleteer dies at last—in hiding—poor, embroiled with his family, and sought by very few—unless his creditors.

I do not suppose you have read much that he wrote except one book; that, I know you have read; and this bustling, bouncing, inconsistent, indefatigable, unsuccessful, earnest scold of a man was named Daniel Defoe;[1] and the book you have read is *Robinson Crusoe*—loved by all boys better than any other book; and loved by all girls, I think, better than any other book—that has no love in it.

You will wonder, perhaps, that a man without academic graces of speech should have made a book that wears so and that wins so. But it wears and wins, because—for one thing—it is free from any extraneous graces of rhetoric; because he was not trying to write a fine book, but only to tell in clearest way a plain story. And if you should ever have any

[1] Daniel Defoe, b. 1661, d. 1731. Little is known of his very early life. Of *Robinson Crusoe* there have been editions innumerable. Of his complete works no full edition has ever been published—probably never will be.

story of your own to tell, and want to tell it well, I advise you to take *Robinson Crusoe* for a model; if you ever want to make a good record of any adventures of your own by sea, or by land, I advise you to take *Robinson Crusoe* for a model; and if you do, you will not waste words in painting sunsets, or in decorating storms and sea-waves; but, without your straining, and by the simple colorless truth of your language, the sunsets will show their glow, and the storms rise and roar, and the waves dash and die along the beach as they do in nature.

### OF QUEEN ANNE

THOUGH not in great favor with the courtiers of Queen Anne, Defoe did serve her government effectively upon the Commission in Edinburgh, which brought about in this Queen's time (and to her great honor) the legislative union of England and Scotland. She came, you know, to be called the "Good Queen Anne;" and we must try and get a better glimpse of her before we push on with our literary story. Royal duties brought more ripeness of character than her young days promised. I have said that she was not so attractive personally as her sister Mary; not

tall, but heavy in figure—not unlike the present good Queen of England, but less active by far; sometimes dropsical—gouty, too, and never getting over a strong love for the table. She had great waves of brown hair—ringleted and flowing over her shoulders; and she had an arm and hand which Sir Godfrey Kneller —who painted her—declared to be the finest in all England; and whoso is curious in such matters can still see that wonderful hand and arm in her portrait at Windsor. Another charm she possessed was a singularly sweet and sympathetic voice; and she read the royal messages to the high court of Parliament with a music that has never been put in them since. If she had written them herself, I am afraid music would not have saved them; for she was not strong-minded, and was a shallow student; she *would* spell phonetically, and played havoc with the tenses. Nor was she rich in conversation, or full. Swift—somewhere in his journal—makes merry with her disposition to help out—as so many of us do—by talk about the weather; and there is a story that when, after King William's death, the great Marquis of Normanby came on a visit of sympathy and gratulation to the new sovereign, the Queen, at an awkward pause, piped out, in her

sweet voice: "It 's a fine day, Marquis!" Whereat the courtier, who was more full of dainty speech, said—in pretty recognition of its being the first day of her reign—"Your Majesty must allow me to say that it 's the finest day I ever saw in my life!" But this good Queen was full of charities, always beloved, and never failed to show that best mark of real ladyhood—the utmost courtesy and kindliness of manner to dependants and to her servants.

### AN IRISH DRAGOON

Among the writers specially identified with this Queen's reign was Sir Richard Steele;[1] not a grand man, or one of large influence; and yet one so kindly by nature, and so gracious in his speech and writing, that the world is not yet done with pardoning, and loving, and pitying that elegant author of the *Tatler* —though he was an awful spendthrift, and a fashionable tippler, and a creature of always splendid, and always broken, promises.

He was Irish born; was schooled at the Charter-house in London, where he met with

[1] Richard Steele, b. 1672; d. 1729. He was born in Dublin, and died on his wife's estate at Llanngunnor, near Caermarthen, in Wales.

that other master of delicate English, Joseph Addison—they being not far from the same age—and knitting a boy friendship there which withstood a great many shocks of manhood. They were together at Oxford, too, but not long; for Steele, somehow, slipped College early and became a trooper, and learned all the ways of the fast fellows of the town. With such a training—on the road to which his Irish blood led him with great jollity—one would hardly have looked to him for any early talk about the life of a true *Christian Hero*. But he did write a book so entitled, in those wild young days, as a sort of kedge anchor, he says, whereby he might haul out from the shoals of the wicked town, and indulge in a sort of contemplative piety. It was and is a very good little book;[1] but it did not hold a bit, as an anchor. And when he came to be joked about his Christian Heroship, he wrote plays (perhaps to make averages good) more moral and cleanly than those of Etherege or Wycherley—with bright things in them; but not enough of such, or of orderly proprieties,

[1] The *Christian Hero* appeared in 1701; and it was in the same year that Steele's first play of "The Funeral" was acted at Drury Lane. "The Lying Lover" appeared in 1703, and "The Tender Husband" in 1705.

to keep them popular. Of course, this fun-loving, dusky, good-hearted, broad-shouldered Irish trooper falls in love easily; marries, too, of a sudden, some West Indian lady, who dies within a year, leaving him a Barbadoes estate —said to be large—does look large to Captain Steele through his cups—but which gives greater anxieties than profits, and is a sort of castle in Spain all through his life. With almost incredible despatch—after this affliction —he is in love again; this time with the only daughter of a rich Welsh lady. This is his famous Prue, who plays the coquette with him for a while; but writes privily to her anxious mamma that she "can *never, never* love another;" that "he is not high—nor rich—but *so* dutiful; and for his morals and understanding [she says] I refer you to his *Christian Hero*."

Steele's marriage comes of it—a marriage whose ups and downs, and lights and shadows have curious and very graphic illustration in the storm of notelets which he wrote to his wife—on bill-heads, perfumed paper, tavern reckonings—all, singularly enough, in existence now, and carefully kept in the Library of the British Museum.

Here is a part of one, written just before his marriage:

"Madam, it is the hardest thing in the World to be in Love, and yet attend Business. As for me all that speak to me find me out. . . . A gentleman ask'd me this morning what news from Lisbon, and I answered, 'She 's exquisitely handsome.'" Here 's another—after marriage: "Dear Prue, I enclose two guineas, and will come home exactly at seven. Yrs tenderly." And again: "Dear Prue, I enclose five guineas, but cannot come home to dinner. Dear little woman, take care of thyself, and eat and drink cheerfully." Yet again: "Dear Prue, if you do not hear of me before three to-morrow, believe that I am too [tipsy] to obey your orders; but, however, know me to be your most affectionate, faithful husband."

It is more promising for a man to speak of his own tippling than to have others speak of it; nor was this writer's sinning in that way probably beyond the average in his time. But he was of that mercurial temperament which took wine straight to the brain; and so was always at bad odds with those men of better digestion (such as Swift and Addison) who were only tickled effusively with such bouts as lifted the hilarious Captain Steele into a noisy effervescence.

There are better and worse letters than those

I have read; but never any lack of averment that he enjoys most of anything in life his wife's delightful presence—but can't get home, really cannot; some excellent fellows have come in, or he is at the tavern—business is important; and she is always his charming Prue; and always he twists a little wordy aureole of praise about her head or her curls. I suppose she took a deal of comfort out of his tender adjectives; but I think she learned early not to sit up for him, and got over that married woe with great alacrity. There is evidence that she loved him throughout; and other evidence that she gave him some moral fisticuffs—when he did get home—which made his next stay at the tavern easier and more defensible.

But he loved his Prue, in his way, all her life through, and showed a beautiful fondness for his children. In that budget of notelets I spoke of (and which the wife so carefully cherished), are some charming ones to his children: thus he writes to his daughter Elizabeth, whose younger sister, Mary, has just begun to put her initials, M. S., to messages of love to him:

"Tell her I am delighted: tell her how many fine things those two letters stand for when she

writes them: *M. S.* is *milk and sugar; mirth and safety; musick and songs; meat and sauce,* as well as *Molly and Spot,* and *Mary and Steele.* You see I take pleasure in conversing with you by prattling anything to divert you. Yr aff. father."

But you must not think Steele was a man of no importance save in his own family. His friends counted by scores and hundreds; he had warm patrons among the chiefest men of the time; had political preferment and places of trust and profit, far better than his old captaincy; could have lived in handsome style and without anxieties, if his reckless kindnesses and convivialities had not made him improvident.

### STEELE'S LITERARY QUALITIES

Nor must we forget the work by which he is chiefly known, I mean his establishment of the *Tatler*—the forerunner of all those delightful essays which went to the making of the *Spectator* and the *Guardian;* these latter having the more credit for their dignity and wise reticence, but the *Tatler* being more vivacious, and quite as witty. Addison came to the help of Steele in the *Tatler,* and Steele afterward

joined forces with Addison in the *Spectator*. I happen to be the owner of a very old edition of these latter essays, in whose "Table of Contents" some staid critic of the last generation has written his (or her) comments on the various topics discussed; and I find against the papers of Addison, such notes as—"*instructive, sound, judicious;*" and against those of Steele, I am sorry to say, such words as "*flighty, light, witty, graceful, worthless;*" and I am inclined to think the criticisms are pretty well borne out by the papers; but if *flighty* and *light*, he was not unwholesome; and he did not always carry the rollicking ways of the tavern into the little piquant journalism, where the grave and excellent Mr. Addison presided with him. Nay, there are better things yet to be said of him. He argued against the sin and folly of duelling with a force and pungency that went largely to stay that evil; and he never touches a religious topic that his manner does not take on an awe and a respect which belongs to the early pages of the *Christian Hero*. There are touches of pathos, too, in his writing, quite unmatchable; but straight and quick upon these you are apt to catch sound of the jingling spurs of the captain of dragoons. Thus, in that often quoted

allusion to his father's death (which happened in his boyhood), he says:

"I went into the room where his body lay, and my mother sat weeping alone by it. I had my battledore in my hand, and fell a beating the coffin, and calling 'Papa.' . . . My mother catched me in her arms, and almost smothered me in her embraces, and told me, in a flood of tears, 'Papa could not hear me, and would play with me no more.' "

This is on page 364 of the *Tatler*, and on page 365 he says: "A large train of disasters were coming into my memory, when my servant knocked at my closet door, and interrupted me with a letter, attended with a hamper of wine, of the same sort with that which is to be put to sale on Thursday next, at Garraway's coffee-house." And he sends for three of his friends—which was so like him!

So he goes through life—a kindly, good-hearted, tender, intractable, winning fellow; talking, odd-whiles, piously—spending freely—drinking fearlessly—loving widely—writing archly, wittily, charmingly.

We have a characteristic glimpse of him in his later years—for he lived far down into the days of the Georges (one of whom gave him

his knighthood and title)—when he is palsied, at his charming country home in Wales, and totters out to see the village girls dance upon the green, and insists upon sending off to buy a new gown for the best dancer; this was so like him! And it would have been like him to carry his palsied steps straight thereafter to the grave where his Prue and the memory of all his married joys and hopes lay sleeping.

## JOSEPH ADDISON

Addison's character was, in a measure, the complement of Steele's. He was coy, dignified, reticent—not given to easy familiarities at sight—nor greatly prone to over-fondling. He was the son of an English rector down in Wiltshire; was born in a cottage still standing in Milston—a few miles north of Salisbury. He was a Charter-house boy and Oxford man; had great repute there as scholar—specially as Latinist—became a Fellow—had great Whig friends, who, somehow, secured him a pension, with which he set out upon European travel; and he wrote about what he saw in Italy, and other parts, in a way that is fresh and readable now. He was a year or two younger than

Congreve, and a few weeks[1] only younger than Steele; nine years younger than De Foe, of whom it is probable he never knew or cared to know.

Very early in his career Addison had the aid of Government friends: his dignity of carriage gave them assurance; his reticence forbade fear of babbling; his elegant pen gave hope of good service; and he came to high political task-work—first, in those famous verses where he likens the fighting hero, Marlborough—then fresh from Blenheim—to the angel, who,

> "——by Divine command,
> With rising tempests shakes a guilty land,
> . . . . .
> And pleased th' Almighty's orders to perform,
> Rides in the whirlwind and directs the storm."

That poem took him out from scholarly obscurity, and set him well afoot in the waiting-rooms of statesmen. Poetry, however, was not to be his office; though, some years after, he did win the town by the academic beauties of his tragedy of "Cato"—the memory of which has come bobbing down over school-

[1] I take the careful reckoning of Mr. Dobson in his *Life of Steele*, 1886.

Joseph Addison
One of His Majesty's Secretaries of State

benches, by the "Speech of Sempronius," to days some of us remember—

"——My voice is still for war!
Gods, can a Roman Senate long debate
Which of the two to choose—slavery or death!"

I suppose that speech may have slipped out of modern reader-books; but it used to make one of the stock declamations, on which ambitious school-boys of my time spent great floods of fervid elocution.

Addison wrote somewhat, as I have said, for Steele's first periodic venture in the *Tatler*, attracted by its opportunities and the graces of it; and they together plotted and carried into execution the publication of the *Spectator*. I trust that its quiet elegance has not altogether fallen away from the knowledge of this generation of young people. Dr. Johnson, you know, said of its Addison papers, that whoever would write English well should give his days and nights to their perusal. Yet such a journal could and would never succeed now: it does not deal with questions of large and vital interest; its sentences do not crackle and blaze with the heat we look for in the preachments of our time. Its leisurely discourse—placid as summer brooks—would beguile us

to sleep. A ream of old *Spectators* discussing proprieties and modesties would not put one of our daring ball-room belles to the blush. The talks of these old gentlemen about the minor morals were too mild, perhaps too merciful; yet it is well to know of them; and one can go to a great many worse quarters than the *Spectator*, even now, for proper hints about etiquette, manners, and social proprieties.

### SIR ROGER DE COVERLEY

Whatever other writings of these gallant gentlemen and teachers of Queen Anne's time the reader may have upon his shelves, he cannot do better than equip them with that little story (excerpted from the *Spectator*) of "Sir Roger De Coverley." No truer or more winning picture of worthy old English knighthood can you find anywhere in literature; nowhere such a tender twilight color falling through books upon old English country homes. Those papers made the scaffolding by which our own Irving built up his best stories about English country homesteads, and English revels of Christmas; and the De Coverley echoes sound sweetly and surely all up and down the pages of *Bracebridge Hall.*

The character of Sir Roger will live forever —so gracious—so courteous—so dignified—so gentle: his servants love him, and his dogs, and his white gelding.

"It being a cold day," says his old butler, "when he made his will, he left for mourning to every man in the parish a great frieze coat, and to every woman a black riding-hood. Captain Sentry showed great kindnesses to the old house-dog my master was so fond of. It would have gone to your heart to have heard the moans the dumb creature made on the day of my master's death. He has never joyed himself since—no more has any of us."

Yet there were plenty of folks who sneered at these papers even then—as small—not worthy of notice. That great, bustling, slashing, literary giant, Dean Swift, says to Mistress Hester Johnson, "Do you read the *Spectators?* I never do; they never come in my way. They say abundance of them are very pretty." "Very pretty!" a vast many satiric shots have been fired off to that tune. And yet Swift and Addison had been as friendly as two men so utterly unlike could be.

To complete the De Coverley picture, and give it relish in the boudoirs of the time, the

authors paint the old knight in love—delicately, but deeply and wofully in love—with a certain unnamed widow living near him, and whose country house overlooks the park of the De Coverley estate.

"Oh, the many moonlight nights that I have walked by myself, and thought on the widow, by the music of the nightingales!"

This sounds like Steele. And the old knight leaves to her

"Whom he has loved for forty years, a pearl necklace that was his mother's, and a couple of silver bracelets set with jewels."

This episode has an added interest, because about those times the dignified and coy Mr. Addison was very much bent upon marrying the elegant Lady Warwick, whose son had been correspondent—perhaps pupil of his. He did not bounce into marriage—like Steele—with his whole heart in his eyes and his speech; it was a long pursuit, and had its doubtful stages; six years before the affair really came about, he used to write to the Warwick lad about the tom-tits, and the robin-redbreasts, and their pretty nests, and the nightingales.

But Addison, more or less fortunate than Sir Roger, does win the widow's hand, and has a sorry time of it with her. She never forgets to look a little down upon him, and he never forgets a keen knowledge of it.

He has the liberty, however, after his marriage—with certain limitations—of a great fine home at Holland House, which is one of the few old country houses still standing in London, in the midst of the gardens, where Addison used to walk, in preference to my Lady's chamber. His habits were to study of a morning—dine at a tavern; then to Button's coffee-house, near to Covent Garden, for a meet with his cronies; and afterward—when the spectre of marriage was real to him—to the tavern again, and to heavier draughts than he was wont to take in his young days.

Pope said he was charming in his talk; but never so in mixed company; never when the auditors were so new or so many as to rouse his self-consciousness; this tied his tongue; but with one or two he knew well, the stream of the *Spectator's* talk flowed as limpidly as from his pen.

He was not a great student; Bentley would have laughed at hearing him called so. But he could use the learning he had with rare

deftness, and make more out of a page of the ancients than Bentley could make out of a volume. His graces of speech, and aptitude for using a chance nugget of knowledge, made him subject of sneer from those who studied hard and long. A man who beats his brains against books everlastingly, without great conquests, is apt to think lightly of the gifts of one like Addison, who by mere impact gets a gracious send-off into elegant talk.

If one has read nothing else of Addison's, I think he may read with profit the "Vision of Mirza." That, too, used to be one of the jewels in the ancient reader-books, and had so many of the graces of a story, that the book —my book at least—used to fall open of itself on those pages where began the wonderful vision in the Valley of Bagdad.

Though more years have passed since my reading of it than I dare tell, yet at the bare mention of the name I seem to see the great clouds of mist which gather on the hither and the thither sides of the valley: I see the haunting Genius in the costume of a shepherd, who from his little musical instrument makes sounds that are exceeding sweet.

Then I seem to see the prodigious tide of water rolling through the valley, and the long

bridge with the crumbling arches stretching athwart the stream, and the throngs of people crowding over, and falling and slipping into the angry tide—which is the tide of death; I see that the larger number fall through into the waters, when they have scarce passed over a single arch of the bridge. But whatever may befall, always the throng is pressing on, and always the thousands are dropping away and disappearing in the gulf that sweeps below. I see that, though some few hobble along painfully upon the furthermost and half-broken arches that stand in the flood, not one of all the myriads passes over in safety; and I behold again (with Mirza) that beyond—far beyond, where the clouds of mist have lifted —lies a stretch of placid water, with islands covered with fruits and flowers, and a thousand little shining seas run in and out among these Islands of the Blessed. And when I look the other way, to see what may lie under the other and darker clouds of mist, lo! the shepherd who has conjured the Vision is gone; and instead of the rolling tide, the arched bridge, the crowding myriads, I see nothing but the long, hollow Valley of Bagdad, with oxen, sheep, and camels grazing upon the sides of it. It seemed to me, fifty years ago, that a

man who could make such visions appear, ought to keep on making them appear, all his life long.

I have said nothing of the political life of Addison; there are no high lights in it that send their flashes down to us. He held places, indeed, of much consideration; his aptitudes, his courtesies, his discretion, his sagacities always won respect; but he was never a force in politics; the only time he attempted parliamentary speaking he broke down; but with a pen in his hand he never broke down until failing health and latter-day anxieties of many sorts shook his power. I have already hinted at the probable infelicities of his late and distinguished marriage; whatever else may be true of it (and authorities are conflicting), it certainly did not bring access of youth or ambition or joyousness.

In his later years, too, there came a quarrel with his old friend Steele—cutting more deeply into the heart of this reticent man than it could cut into the much-scarified heart of that impressionist, the author of the *Tatler;* there were stories, too, pretty well supported, that Addison in those last weary days of his—feeble and asthmatic—drank over-freely, to spur his jaded mind up to a level with the talk of sympathizing friends.

Pope, too, in those times, had possibly aggravated the quiet, calm essayist, with the sting of his splendid but scorpion pen;[1] and all accounts assure us that Addison (though under fifty) did give a most kindly welcome to death. The story told by Young, and repeated by Dr. Johnson, of his summoning young Warwick to see how a Christian could die, is very likely apocryphal. It was not like him; this modest philosopher never made himself an exemplar of the virtues. We know, however, that he died calmly and tranquilly. Who can hope for more?

Not many legacies have come down to us from those days of Queen Anne which are worthier than his; and all owe gratitude to him for at least one shining page in all our hymnals: it will keep the name of Addison among the stars.

"The spacious firmament on high,
With all the blue ethereal sky,
And spangled heavens, a shining frame,
Their great Original proclaim.
Th' unwearied sun, from day to day,
Does his Creator's power display,
And publishes to every land
The work of an Almighty hand.

[1] It is, however, seriously to be doubted if Addison ever saw the "Atticus" satire.

"Soon as the evening shades prevail,
The moon takes up the wondrous tale;
And, nightly, to the listening earth,
Repeats the story of her birth;
Whilst all the stars that round her burn,
And all the planets in their turn,
Confirm the tidings as they roll,
And spread the truth from pole to pole."

## CHAPTER VIII

In our last talk we had an opening skirmish with a group of royal people; we saw James II. flitting away ignominiously from a throne he could not fill or hold; we saw that rough fighter, the opinionated William III., coming to his honors—holding hard, and with gauntleted hand, his amiable consort, Queen Mary. I spoke of the relationship of these two; also had some fore-words about Mary's sister, the future Queen Anne, and about the death of her boy, the little Duke of Gloucester.

I had something to say of that easy and artful poet, Matthew Prior, who smartly wrote his way, by judicious panegyrics and well-metred song, from humble station to that of ambassador at the court of France. We had a taste of the elegant Congreve, and said much of that bouncer of a man Daniel De Foe; the character of this latter we cannot greatly esteem—but when can we cease to admire the talent that gave to us the story of *Robinson Crusoe?*

Then I spoke to you of Sir Richard Steele —poor Steele! poor Prue! And I spoke also of his friend Addison, the courtly, the reticent, the graceful, and the good. All of these men outlived William and Mary; all of them shone —in their several ways—through the days of Queen Anne.

### ROYAL GRIEFS AND FRIENDS

Mary, consort of William III., died some six years before the close of the century; she was honestly mourned for by the nation; and I cited some of the tender music which belonged to certain poetic lamentations at the going off of the gentle Queen. The little boy prince, Gloucester, presumptive heir to the throne, died in 1700 (so did John Dryden and Sir William Temple). Scarce two years thereafter and William III.—who was invalided in his latter days, and took frequent out-of-door exercise—was thrown from his horse in passing over the roads—not so smooth as now—between Hampton Court and Kensington. There was some bone-breakage and bruises, which, like a good soldier, he made light of. In the enforced confinement that followed, he struggled bravely to fulfil royal duties; but

within a fortnight, as he listened to Albemarle, who brought news about affairs in Holland, it was observed that his eyes wandered, and his only comment—whose comments had always been like hammer-strokes—was, "I 'm drawing to the end."[1] Two days after he died.

Then the palace doors opened for that "good," and certainly weak, Queen Anne, whose name is so intimately associated with what is called "the Augustan age" of English letters, and whose personal characteristics have already been subjects of mention. She was hardly recovered from her grief at the death of her prince-boy, and was supported at her advent upon royalty by that conspicuous friend of her girl years and constant associate, Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough. It would be hard to reach any proper understanding of social and court influences in Anne's time, without bringing into view the sharp qualities of this First Lady of her Chamber. Very few historians have a good word to say for her. She was the wife of that illustrious general, John of Marlborough, whom we all associate

[1] "*Je tire vers ma fin.*" Smollett (Book I., chap. vi.); not a strong authority in most matters, but—from his profession of medicine—an apt one to ferret out actual details in respect to royal illness.

with his important victories of Blenheim and of Ramillies; and in whose honor was erected the great memorial column in the Park of Woodstock, where every American traveller should go to see remnants of an old royal forest, and to see also the brilliant palace of Blenheim, with its splendid trophies, all given by the nation—at the warm urgence of Queen Anne—in honor of the conquering general.

You know the character of Marlborough—elegant, selfish, politic, treacherous betimes, brave, greedy, sagacious, and avaricious to the last degree. He made a great figure in William's time, and still greater in Anne's reign; his Duchess, too, figured conspicuously in her court. She was as enterprising as the Duke, and as money-loving—having smiles and frowns and tears at command, by which she wheedled or swayed whom she would. She did not believe in charities that went beyond the house of Marlborough; in fact, this ancestress of the Churchills was reckoned by most as a harpy and an elegant vampire. Never a Queen was so beleaguered with such a friend; she was keeper of the privy purse, and Anne found it hard (as current stories ran) to get money from her for her private charities; hard, indeed, to dispose of her cast-off silken

robes as she desired. Why, you ask, did she not blaze up into a flame of anger and of resolve, and bid the Duchess, once for all, begone? Why are some women born weak and patient of the chains that bind them? And why are others born with a cold, imperious disdain and power that tells on weaklings, and makes the space all round them glitter with their sovereignty?

When this Sarah of Marlborough was first in waiting upon the Princess Anne, neither Duke nor Duchess (without titles then) could count enough moneys between them to keep a private carriage for their service; and before the Duke died their joint revenues amounted to £94,000 per annum.

Then the great park at Woodstock became ducal property. I have said it was richly worth visiting; its encircling wall is twelve miles in length; the oaks are magnificent; the artificial waters skirt gardens and shrubberies that extend over three hundred acres; the grass is velvety; the fallow deer are in troops of hundreds. And one must remember, in visiting the locality, that there stood the ancient and renowned royal mansion of Henry II.—that there was born the Black Prince—and, very probably, Chaucer may have wan-

dered thereabout, and studied the "daisies white," and listened to the whirring of the pheasants—a wood-music one may hear now in all the remoter alleys.

How many hundred thousands were expended upon the new Blenheim palace, built in Anne's time, I will not undertake to compute. The paintings gathered in it—spoils of the great Duke's military marches—interest everyone; but the palace is as cold and stately and unhome-like and unlovable as was the Duchess herself.

### BUILDERS AND STREETS

Sir John Vanbrugh[1] was the architect of Blenheim, and you will recognize his name as that of one of the popular comedy writers of Queen Anne's time, who not only wrote plays, but ran a theatre which he built at the Haymarket. It was not so successful as the more famous one which stands thereabout now; the poor architect, too, had a good many buffets from the stinging Duchess of Marlborough; and some stings besides from Swift's waspish

[1] Sir John Vanbrugh, b. (about) 1666; d. 1726. His comedies were better thought of than his buildings, both in his own day and in ours.

pen, which the amiable Duchess did not allow him to forget.

Another architect of these times, better worth our remembering—for his constructive abilities—was Sir Christopher Wren, who designed some forty of the church-spires now standing in London; and he also superintended the construction of the Cathedral of St. Paul's, which had been steadily growing since a date not long after the great fire—thirty-five years intervening between the laying of the foundations and the lifting of the cross to the top of the lantern. It is even said that, when he was well upon ninety, Wren supervised some of the last touches upon this noble monument to his fame.[1]

There was not so much smoke in London in those days—the consumption of coal being much more limited—and the great cross could be seen from Notting Hill, and from the palace windows at Kensington. The Queen never abandoned this royal residence; and from the gravel road by which immediate entrance was made, stretched away the waste hunting ground, afterward converted into the grassy

[1] Sir Christopher Wren, b. 1631; d. 1723. The cathedral was begun in 1675, and virtually finished in 1710, though there may have been many "last touches" for the aged architect.

slopes of Hyde Park—stagnant pools and marshy thickets lying in place of what is now the Serpentine. People living at Reading in that day—whence ladies now come in for a morning's shopping and back to lunch—did then, in seasons of heaviest travelling, put two days to the journey; and joined teams, and joined forces and outriders, to make good security against the highwaymen that infested the great roads leading from that direction into the town. Queen Anne herself was beset and robbed near to Kew shortly before she came to the throne; and along Edgeware Road, where are now long lines of haberdasher shops, and miles of gas-lamps, were gibbets, on which the captured and executed highwaymen were hung up in warning.

### JOHN GAY

Some of these highwaymen were hung up in literature too, and made a figure there; but not, I suspect, in way of warning. It was the witty Dean Swift who suggested to the brisk and frolicsome poet, John Gay, that these gentlemen of the highroad would come well into a pastoral or a comedy; and out of that suggestion came, some years later, "The Beggar's

Opera," with Captain Macheath for a hero, that took the town by storm—ran for sixty and more successive nights, and put its musical, saucy songlets afloat in all the purlieus of London. It was, indeed, the great forerunner of our ballad operas; much fuller, indeed, of grime and foul strokes than Mr. Gilbert's contagious sing-song; but possessing very much of his briskness and quaint turns of thought, and of that pretty shimmer of language which lends itself to melody as easily as the thrushes do.

This John Gay[1]—whose name literary-mongers will come upon in their anthologies—was an alert, well-looking young fellow, who had come out of Devonshire to make his way in a silk-mercer's shop in London. He speedily left the silk-mercer's; but he had that about him of joyousness and amiability, added to a clever but small literary faculty, which won the consideration of helpful friends; and he never lost friends by his antagonisms or his moodiness. Everybody seemed to love to say a good word for John Gay. Swift was almost kind to him; and said he was born to be always twenty-two, and no older. Pope befriended and commended him; great ladies petted him;

[1] John Gay, b. 1685; d. 1732.

and neither Swift nor Pope were jealous of a petting to such as Gay; his range was amongst the daisies—and theirs—above the tree-tops. A little descriptive poem of his, called *Trivia*, brings before us the London streets of that day—the coaches, the boot-blacks, the red-heeled cavaliers, the book-stalls, the markets, the school-boys, the mud, the swinging sign-boards, and the tavern-doors. In the course of it he gives a score or more of lines to a description of the phenomena of the solidly frozen Thames—sharply remembered by a good many living in his time[1]—with booths all along the river, and bullocks cooked upon the frozen roads which bridged the water; and he tells of an old apple-woman, who somehow had her head lopped off when the break-up came, and the ice-cakes piled above the level—tells it, too, in a very Gilbert-like way, as you shall see:

"She now a basket bore;
That head, alas! shall basket bear no more!
Each booth she frequent past, in quest of gain,
And boys with pleasure heard her thrilling strain.

[1] "O roving muse! recall that wondrous year,
When hoary Thames, with frosted osiers crown'd,
Was three long moons in icy fetters bound."
The allusion is doubtless to the year 1684, famous for its exceeding cold.

Ah, Doll! all mortals must resign their breath,
And industry itself submit to Death;
The cracking crystal yields; she sinks; she dies,
Her head chopt off, from her lost shoulder flies;
*Pippins!* she cry'd; but death her voice confounds;
And—*Pip*—*Pip*—*Pip*—along the ice resounds!"

Then there is the ballad, always quoted when critics would show what John Gay could do, and which the Duchess of Queensbury (who greatly befriended him) thought charming; I give the two final verselets only:

"How can they say that nature
Has nothing made in vain;
Why then beneath the water
Should hideous rocks remain?
No eyes the rocks discover,
That lurk beneath the deep,
To wreck the wandering lover,
And leave the maid to weep?

"All melancholy lying,
Thus wailed she for her dear;
Repaid each blast with sighing,
Each billow with a tear;
When o'er the white wave stooping,
His floating corpse she spied;
Then, like a lily drooping,
She bowed her head, and died!"

I think I have shown the best side of him; and it is not very imposing. A man to be petted; one for confections and for valentines, rather than for those lifts of poetic thought which buoy us into the regions of enduring song.

Yet Swift says in a letter, "'The Beggar's Opera' hath knocked down Gulliver!" This joyous poet lies in Westminster Abbey, with an epitaph by Alexander Pope. How, then, can we pass him by?

## JONATHAN SWIFT

But Dean Swift[1] does not lie in Westminster Abbey. We must go to St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, to find his tomb, and that bust of him which looks out upon the main aisle of the old church.

He was born in Dublin, at a house that might have been seen only a few years ago, in Hoey's Court. His father, however, was English, dying before Swift was born; his mother, too, was English, and so poor that it was only

[1] Jonathan Swift, b. 1667; d. 1745. Most noticeable biographies are those by Scott, Craik, and Stephen; the latter not minute, but having judicial repose, and quite delightful. Scott's edition of his works (originally published in 1814) is still the fullest and best.

through the charity of an uncle the lad came to have schooling and a place at Trinity College—the charity being so doled out that Swift groaned under it; and groaned under the memory of it all his life. He took his degree there, under difficulties; squabbling with the teachers of logic and metaphysics, and turning his back upon them and upon what they taught.

After some brief stay with his mother in Leicestershire, he goes, at her instance, and in recognition of certain remote kinship with the family of Sir William Temple, to seek that diplomat's patronage. He was received charitably—to be cordial was not Temple's manner—at the beautiful home of Sheen;[1] and thereafter, on Temple's change of residence, was for many years an inmate of the house at Moor Park. There he eats the bread of dependence—sulkily at times, and grudgingly always. Another *protégée* of the house was a sparkling-

[1] Sir William Temple did not finally abandon his home at Sheen—where he had beautiful gardens—until the year 1689. A stretch of Richmond Park, with its deer-fed turf, now covers all traces of Temple's old home; the name however is kept most pleasantly alive by the pretty Sheen cottage (Professor Owen's home), with its carp-pond in front, and its charming, sequestered bit of wild garden in the rear.

eyed little girl, Hester Johnson—she scarce ten when he was twenty-three—and who, doubtless, looked admiringly upon the keen, growling, masculine graduate of Dublin, who taught her to write.

Swift becomes secretary to Sir William; through his influence secures a degree at Oxford (1692); pushes forward his studies, with the Moor Park library at his hand; takes his own measure—we may be sure—of the stately, fine diplomat; measures King William too—who, odd times, visits Temple at his country home, telling him how to cut his asparagus—measures him admiringly, yet scornfully; as hard-working, subtle-thoughted, ambitious, dependent students are apt to measure those whose consequence is inherited and factitious.

Then, with the bread of this Temple charity irking his lusty manhood, he swears (he is overfond of swearing) that he will do for himself. So he tempestuously quits Moor Park and goes back to Ireland, where he takes orders, and has a little parish with a stipend of £100 a year. It is in a dismal country—looking east on the turbid Irish Sea, and west on bog-lands—no friends, no scholars, no poets, no diplomats, no Moor-Park gardens.

Tired of this waste, and with new and better proposals from Temple—who misses his labors—Swift throws up his curacy (or whatever it may be) and turns again toward England.

There is record of a certain early flurry of feeling at date of this departure from his first Irish parish—a tender, yet incisive, and tumultuous letter to one "Varina,"[1] for whom he promises to "forego all;" Varina, it would seem, discounted his imperious rapture, without wishing to cut off ulterior hopes. But ulteriors were never in the lexicon of Swift; and he broke away for his old cover at Moor Park. Sir William welcomes, almost with warmth, the returned secretary, who resumes old studies and duties, putting a fiercer appetite to his work, and a greater genius. Miss Hester is there to be guided, too; she sixteen, and he fairly turned among the thirties; she of an age to love moonlight in the Moor Park gardens, and he of an age—when do we have any other?—to love tender worship.

[1] "Varina" was a Miss Waring, sister of a college mate. Years after, when Swift came by better church appointments, Varina wrote to him a letter calculated to fan the flame of a constant lover; but she received such reply—at once disdainful and acquiescent—as was met only with contemptuous silence.

But *The Battle of the Books*[1] and *The Tale of a Tub*, are even then seething and sweltering in his thought. They are wonderful products both; young people cannot warm to them as they do to the men of Liliput and of Brobdingnag; but there are old folk who love yet, in odd hours, to get their faculties stirred by contact with the flashing wit and tremendous satire of the books named.

The *Battle*—rather a pamphlet than a book—deals with the antagonism, then noisy, between advocates of ancient and modern learning, to which Bentley, Wotton, and Temple were parties. Swift strikes off heads all round the arena, but inclines to the side of his patron, Temple; and in a wonderful figure, of wonderful pertinence, and with witty appointments, he likens the moderns to noisome spiders, spinning out of their own entrails the viscous "mathematical" net-work, which catches the vermin on which they feed; and contrasting these with the bees (ancients), who seek natural and purer sources of nutriment—storing "wax and honey," which are the sources of the "light and sweetness of life." There are horribly coarse streaks in

[1] Both of these satires written between 1696–1698, but not published till six years later.

this satire, as there are in *The Tale of a Tub;* but the wit is effulgent and trenchant.

In this latter book there is war on all pedantries again; but mostly on shams in ecclesiastic teachings and habitudes; Swift finding (as so many of us do) all the shams, in practices which are not his own. It is a mad, strange, often foul-mouthed book, with thrusts in it that go to the very marrow of all monstrous practices in all ecclesiasticisms; showing a love for what is honest and of good report, perhaps; but showing stronger love for thwacking the skulls of all sinners in high places; and the higher the place the harder is the thwack.

Not long after these things were a-brewing, Sir William Temple died (1699), bequeathing his papers to his secretary. Swift looked for more. So many wasted years! Want of money always irked him. But he goes to London to see after the publication of Temple's papers. He has an interview with King William—then in his last days—to whom Temple had commended him, but no good comes of that. He does, however, get place as chaplain for Lord Berkeley; goes to Ireland with him; reads good books to Lady Berkeley —among them the *Occasional Reflections of*

*the Hon. Robert Boyle,* of whose long sentences I gave a taste in an earlier chapter.

Some of these Boyle meditations were on the drollest of topics—as, for instance, "Upon the Sight of a Windmill Standing Still," and again, "Upon the Paring of a rare Summer Apple."

Swift had no great appetite for such "parings;" but Lady Berkeley being insatiate, he slips a meditation of his own, in manuscript, between the leaves of the great folio of the Hon. Mr. Boyle; and opening to the very place begins reading, for her edification, "Meditations on a Broomstick." "Dear me!" says her ladyship, "what a strange subject! But there is no knowing what useful instructions this wonderful man may draw from topics the most trivial. Pray, read on, Mr. Swift."

And he did. He was not a man given to smiles when a joke was smouldering; and he went through his meditation with as much unction as if the Hon. Robert had written it. The good lady kept her eyes reverently turned up, and never smacked the joke until it came out in full family conclave.

I have told this old story (which, like most good stories, some critics count apocryphal) because it is so like Swift; he had such keen sense of the ridiculous, that he ran like a

hound in quest of it—having not only a hound's scent but a hound's teeth.

At Laracor, the little Irish parish which he came by shortly after, he had a glebe and a horse, and became in a way domesticated there, so far as such a man could be domesticated anywhere. He duplicated, after a fashion, some features of the Moor-Park gardens; he wrote sermons there which are surprisingly good.

One wonders, as he comes from toiling through the sweat and muck and irreverent satire of *The Tale of a Tub*, what could have possessed the man to write so piously. He was used to open his sermons with a little prayer that was devout enough and all-embracing enough for the prayer-book. Then there is a letter of his to a young clergyman, giving advice about the make-up of his sermons, which would serve for an excellent week-day discourse at Marquand Chapel.

Indeed he has somewhat to say against the use of "hard words—called by the better sort of vulgar, fine language"—that is worth repeating:

"I will appeal to any man of letters whether at least nineteen or twenty of these perplexing words might not be changed into easy ones, such as naturally first occur to ordinary men; . . .

the fault is nine times in ten owing to affectation, and not want of understanding. When a man's thoughts are clear, the properest words will generally offer themselves first, and his own judgment will direct him in what order to place them, so as they may be best understood. In short, that simplicity, without which no human performance can arrive to any great perfection, is nowhere more eminently useful than in this."

But let us not suppose from all this that Swift has settled down tamely, and month by month, into the jog-trot duties of a small Irish vicar; no, no! there is no quiet element in his nature. He has gone back and forth from Dublin to London—sometimes on a Berkeley errand—sometimes on his own. He has met Congreve, an old school-fellow, and Prior and Gay; he has found the way to Will's Coffee-house and to Button's;[1] has some day seen Dryden—just tottering to the grave; has certainly dined with Addison, and finished a bottle with Steele. They call him the mad parson at Button's; they have seen *The Tale of a*

[1] Button's was another favorite Coffee-house in Russell Street—on the opposite side from Will's—and nearer Covent Garden. I must express my frequent obligations, in respect of London Topography, to the interesting *Literary Landmarks* of Mr. Laurence Hutton.

*Tub;* his epigrams are floating from mouth to mouth; his irony cuts like a tiger's claw; he feels the power of his genius tingling to his finger-tips—*he,* a poor Irish parson! why, the whole atmosphere around him, whether at London or at Dublin, is charged and surcharged with Satan's own lightning of worldly promises.

And Hester Johnson, and Moor Park? Well, she has not forgotten him; ah! no; and he has by no means forgotten her. For she, with a good womanly friend, Mrs. Dingley, has gone to live in Ireland; Swift thinks they can live more economically there. These two ladies set up their homestead near to Swift's vicarage; he goes to see them; they come to see him. He is thirty-three, and past; and she twenty, and described as beautiful. Is there any scandalous talking? Scarce one word, it would seem. He is as considerate as ice; and she as coy as summer clouds.

It does not appear that Swift had literary ambition, as commonly reckoned. That *Tale of a Tub* lay by him six or seven years before it came to print. He wrote for Steele's *Tatler,* and for the *Spectator*—not with any understanding that his name was to appear, or that he was to be spoken admiringly of. Many

of his best things were addressed to friends or acquaintances, and never saw the light through any instigation or privity of his own.

When there was some purpose to effect—some wrong to lash—some puppet to knock down—some tow-head to set on fire—some public drowsiness to wake—he rushed into print with a vengeance. Was it benevolence that provoked him to this? was it public spirit? Who can tell? I think there were many times when he thought as much; but I believe that never a man more often deceived himself than did Swift; and that over and over he mistook the incentives of his own fiery and smarting spirit for the leadings of an angel of light.

When we think of the infrequency and awkwardness of travel in that day, we are not a little amazed to find him going back and forth as he did from Ireland to London. The journey was not, as now, a mere skip over to Holyhead, and then a five hours' whirl to town, but a long, uncertain sail in some lugger of a vessel—blown as the winds blew—till a landing was made at Bristol or Swansea; and then the four to seven days of coaching (as the roads might be) through Bath to London. Sometimes it is some interest of the poor Irish Church that takes him over, for which we

must give him due credit; but oftener it is his own unrest. His energies and his unsatisfied mind starve if not roused and bolstered and chafed by contact with minds as keen and hard, from which will come the fiery disputation that he loves. Great cities, where great interests are astir and great schemes fomenting, are magnets whose drawing power such intellects cannot resist. He is in London five or six months in 1701, six or eight the next year, six or eight the next, and so on.

## SWIFT'S POLITICS

He is in politics, too, which ran at high tide all through Anne's time and the previous reign; you will read no history or biography stretching into that period but you may be confounded (at least I am) with talk of Whigs and Tories; and of what Somers did, and of what Harley did, and of what Ormond might do; and it is worth sparing a few moments to say something of the great parties. In a large way Whiggism represented progress and the new impulses which had come in with William III., and Toryism represented what we call conservatism. Thus, in *Old*

*Mortality*, young Henry Morton is the Whig, and her ladyship of Tillietudlem is a starched embodiment of Toryism. Those who favored the Stuart family, and made a martyr of Charles I.—those who leaned to Romanism and rituals, or faith in tradition, were, in general, Tories; and those who brought over William of Orange, or who were dissenters or freethinkers, were apt to be Whigs. So the scars which came of sword-cuts by Cromwellian soldiers were apt to mark an excellent Tory; and the cropped ears of Puritans, that told of the savageness of Prince Rupert's dragoons, were pretty sure to brand a man a Whig for life. But these distinctions were not steady and constant; thus, the elegant and fastidious Sir William Temple was a Whig; and old Dryden, clinking mugs with good fellows at Will's Coffee-house, was a Tory. Again, the courtly and quiet Mr. Addison, with his De Coverley reverences, was a good Whig; and Pope, with his *Essay on Man*, and fellowship with freethinkers, was Toryish. Swift began with being a Whig, to which side his slapdash wilfulness, his fellowship with Temple, and his scorn of tradition drew him; but he ended with veering over to the Tory ranks, where his hate of Presbyterianism and

his eager thrusts at canting radicals gave him credit and vogue.

Addison and others counted him a turncoat, and grew cold to him; for party hates were most hot in those days; Swift himself says—the politicians wrangle like cats. He was tired, too, of waiting on Whig promises; perhaps he had larger hope of preferment with the Tories; Steele alleged this with bitterness; and there can be no doubt that Swift had an eye on preferment. Why not? Can he, so alert in mind, so loving of dignity, so conscious of power, see Mr. Addison coming to place as Secretary of State, and Steele with his fat commissions, without a tingling and irritating sense of dissatisfaction? Can he see good, amiable, pious dunces getting planted year after year in fat bishoprics, without a torturing remembrance of that poor little parish of Laracor, with a following so feeble that he is fain to open service some days (his factotum being the only auditor) with—"my dearly beloved Roger, the Scripture moveth you and me in sundry places——"

How these contrasts must have grated on the mind of a man who looked down on all their lordships; who looked down on Steele; and who could count on his finger-ends the

personages whom he scanned eye to eye—and who were upon a level with his commanding height.

He did service, too—this master of the pen and master of causticity—that to most would have brought quick reward; but he was too strong and too proud and too independent to come by reward easily. Such a man is bowed to reverently; is invited to dine hither and yon; is flattered, is humored, is conciliated; but as for office—ah! that is another matter. He is unsafe; he will kick over the traces; he will take the bit in his mouth; he will be his own man and not our man. What court, what cabinet, what clique could trust to the moderation, to the docility, to the reticence of a person capable of writing *Gulliver's Travels*, and of turning all court scandals, all political intrigues, all ecclesiastic decorum, into a penny-show?

He is, indeed, urged for Bishop of Hereford —seems to have excellent chance there; but some brother Bishop (I think 't is the Archbishop of York), who is much afraid, as he deserves to be, of *The Tale of a Tub*—says to the hesitating Queen,—"Better inquire first if this man be really a Christian;" and this frights the good Queen and the rest. So Swift is let

off with the poor sop of the Deanery of St. Patrick's.

### HIS LONDON JOURNAL

We know all about those days of his in London—days of expectancy. He has told us:

"The ministry are good hearty fellows. I use them like dogs, because I expect they will use me so. They call me nothing but Jonathan. I said I believed they would leave me Jonathan, as they found me; and that I never knew a minister do anything for those whom they make companions of their pleasures; and I believe you will find it so, but *I* care not."

And to whom does he talk so confidentially, and tell all the story of those days? Why, to Hester Johnson. It is all down in Stella's journal—written for her eye only; and we have it by purest accident. It was begun in 1710—he then in his forty-third year, and she in her thirtieth.

She has kept her home over in Ireland with Mrs. Dingley—seeing him on every visit there, and on every day, almost, of such visits; and, as her sweetest pasturage, feeding on letters he writes other times, and lastly on this Stella

journal, "for her dear eyes," at the rate of a page, or even two pages a day, for some three years.

All his London day's life comes into it. Let us listen:

"Dined at the chop-house with Will Pate, the learned woollen draper, then we sauntered at china-shops and booksellers; went to the tavern; drank 2 pints of white wine; never parted till ten. Have a care of those eyes—pray—pray, pretty Stella!

"So you have a fire now, and are at cards at home; I think of dining in my lodgings to-day on a chop and a pot of ale.

"Shall I? Well, then, I will try to please M. D. ['M. D.' is 'my dear'; or 'my dears,' when it includes, as it often does, Mrs. Dingley]. I was to-night at Lord Masham's; Lord Dupplin took out my little pamphlet, the Secretary read a good deal of it to Lord Treasurer; they all commended it to the skies; so did I.

"I 'll answer your letter to-morrow; good night, M. D. Sleep well."

Again:

"I have no gilt paper left, so you must be content with plain. I dined with Lord Treasurer.

"A poem is out to-day inscribed to me: a

Whiggish poem and good for nothing. They teased me with it.

"I am not yet rid of my cold. No news to tell you; went to dine with Mrs. Vanhomrigh, a neighbor. [Then a long political tale, and] Good night, my dear little rogues."

'T is a strange journal; such a mingling of court gossip, sharp political thrusts, lover-like, childish prattle, and personal details. If he is sick, he scores down symptoms and curatives as boldly as a hospital nurse; if he lunches at a chop-house, he tells cost; if he takes in his waistcoat, he tells Stella of it; if he dines with Addison, he tells how much wine they drank; if a street beggar or the Queen shed tears, they slop down into that Stella journal; if she wants eggs and bacon, he tells where to buy and what to give; if Lady Dalkeith paints, he sees it with those great, protuberant eyes of his, and tells Stella.

There is coarseness in it, homeliness, indelicacies, wit, sharp hits, dreary twaddle, and repeated good-nights to his beloved M. D.'s, and —to take care of themselves, and eat the apples at Laracor, and wait for him. No—I mistake; I don't think he ever says with definiteness Stella must wait for him. I should say (without looking critically over the journal to that

end) that he cautiously avoided so positive a committal. And she?—ah! she, poor girl, waits without the asking. And those indelicacies and that coarseness? Well, this strange, great man can do nothing wrong in her eyes.

But she does see that those dinings at a certain Mrs. Vanhomrigh's come in oftener and oftener. 'T is a delightfully near neighbor, and her instinct scents something in the wind. She ventures a question, and gets a stormy frown glowering over a page of the journal that puts her to silence. The truth is, Mrs. Vanhomrigh [1] has a daughter—young, clever, romantic, not without personal charms, who is captivated by the intellect of Mr. Swift; all the more when he volunteers direction of her studies, and leads her down the flowery walks of poetry under his stalwart guidance.

Then the suspicious entries appear more thickly in the journal. "Dined with Mrs. Vanhomrigh"—and again: "Stormy, dined with a neighbor"—"could n't go to court, so went to the Vans." And thus this romance went on ripening to the proportions that are set down in the poem of "Cadenus and Vanessa." He is old, she is young.

[1] Acquaintance with Miss Vanhomrigh probably first made in winter of 1708, but no family intimacy till year 1710. See *Athenæum,* January 16, 1886, in notice of Lane-Poole's *Letters and Journals of Swift.*

"Vanessa, not in years a score,
Dreams of a gown of forty-four;
Imaginary charms can find
In eyes with reading almost blind.
. . . . . .
Cadenus, common forms apart,
In every scene had kept his heart;
Had sigh'd and languished, vowed and writ,
For pastime or to show his wit."

But this wit has made conquest of her; she

"——called for his poetic works:
[Cupid] meantime in secret lurks;
And, while the book was in her hand,
The urchin from his private stand
Took aim, and shot with all his strength
A dart of such prodigious length,
It pierced the feeble volume through,
And deep transfixed her bosom too."

This is part of his story of it, which he put in her hands for her reading;[1] and which, like the Stella journal, only saw the light after the woman most interested in it, was in the ground.

[1] Henry Morley, in the recent editing of his Carrisbrooke *Swift,* lays stress upon the sufficient warning which Miss Vanhomrigh should have found in this poem. It appears to me that he sees too much in Swift's favor and too little in Vanessa's.

### IN IRELAND AGAIN

Well, Swift at last goes back to Ireland—all his larger designs having miscarried—a saddened and disappointed man; full of growlings and impatience; taking with him from that wreck of London life and political forgatherings, only the poor flotsam of an Irish deanery.

He has some few friends to welcome him there: Miss Hester and Mrs. Dingley among the rest. How gladly would Stella have put all her woman's art and her womanly affection to the work of cheering and making glad the embittered and disappointed Dean; but no; he has no notion of being handicapped by marriage; he is sterner, narrower, more misanthropic than ever. All the old severe proprieties and distance govern their intercourse. He visits them betimes and listens to their adulatory prattle; they, too, come up to the deanery when there are friends to entertain; often take possession when the Dean is away.

The church dignitaries are not open-handed in their advances; the *Tale of a Tub*, and stories of that London life (not much of it amongst churches) have put a wall between them and the Dean. But he interests himself

in certain questions of taxation and of currency, which seem of vital importance to the common people; and he wins, by an influence due to his sharp pamphleteering, what they count a great relief from their dangers or burdens. Thus he becomes a street idol, and crowds throw up their caps for this doctor militant, whom they call the good Dean. He has his private large charities, too; there are old women, decrepit and infirm, whom he supports year after year; does this—Swift-like—when he will haggle a half hour about the difference of a few pennies in the price for a bottle of wine, and will serve his clerical friends with the lees of the last dinner: strange, and only himself in everything.

Then Miss Vanhomrigh—after the death of her mother—must needs come over—to the great perplexity of the Doctor—to a little country place which she has inherited in the pretty valley of the Liffey—a short drive away from Dublin; she has a fine house there, and beautiful gardens (Swift never outgrew his old Moor-Park love for gardens); there she receives him, and honors his visits. An old gardener, who was alive in Scott's time, told how they planted a laurel bush whenever the Dean came. Perhaps the Dean was too blinded

for fine reading in the garden alleys then; certainly his fierce headaches were shaking him year by year nearer to the grave.

Miss Hester comes to a knowledge of these visits, and is tortured, but silent. Has she a right to nurse torture? Some biographers say that at her urgence a form of marriage was solemnized between them (1716); but if so, it was undeclared and unregarded. Vanessa, too, has her tortures; she has knowledge of Stella and her friend, and of their attitude with respect to the deanery; so, in a moment of high, impetuous daring, she writes off to Mistress Hester Johnson asking what rights she has over her friend the Dean? Poor Stella wilts at this blow; but is stirred to an angry woman's reply, making (it is said) avowal of the secret marriage. To the Dean, who is away, she encloses Vanessa's letter; and the Dean comes storming back; rages across the country, carrying to Miss Vanhomrigh her own letter—flings it upon the table before her, with that look of blackness that has made duchesses tremble—turns upon his heel, and sees her no more.

In a fortnight, or thereabout, Poor Vanessa was dead. It was a fever they said; may be; certainly, if a fever, there were no hopes in her

life now which could make great head against it. She changed her will before her death, cutting off Swift, who was sole legatee, and leaving one-half to Bishop Berkeley; through whom, strangely enough, Yale College may be said to inherit a part of poor Vanessa's fortune.[1]

Such a blow, by its side bruises, must needs scathe somewhat the wretched Hester Johnson; but time brought a little healing in its wings. The old kindliness and friendship that dated from the pleasant walks in Moor Park, came back—as rosy twilights will sometimes shoot kindly gleams between stormy days, and the blackness of night. And Swift, I think, never came nearer to insupportable grief than when he heard—on an absence in London, a few years thereafter—that Stella was dying week by week.

"Poor Stella," "dear Stella," "poor soul," break into his letters—break, doubtless, into his speech on solitary walks; but in others' presence his dignity and coldness are all assured. There is rarely breakdown where man

[1]Miss Vanhomrigh died in May, 1723; and the final renewal of Bishop Berkeley's deed of gift (of the Whitehall farm, Newport) to Yale College, is dated August 17, 1733.

or woman can see him. Old Dr. Sheridan[1] says that at the last she appealed to him to declare and make public their private marriage; whereat he "turned short away." A more probable story is that in those last days Swift himself proposed public declaration, to which the dying woman could only wave a reply—"too late!"

She died in 1728: he in the sixty-second year of his age, and she forty-eight.

He would have written about her the night she died; had the curtains drawn that he might not see the light where her body lay; but he broke down in the writing. They brought a lock of her hair to him. It was found many years after in an old envelope, worn with handling, with this inscription on it—in his hand—*Only a woman's hair.*

I have not much more to say of Dean Swift, whose long story has kept us away from gentler characters, and from verses more shining than his. Indeed, I do not think the poems of Swift are much read nowadays; surely none but a strong man and a witty one could have written them; but they do not allure us. Every-

[1] Thomas Sheridan, D. D., father of "Dictionary" Sheridan, and grandfather of Richard Brinsley. He was a great friend of Swift, and *Gulliver's Travels* was prepared for the press at his cottage in Cavan (Quilca).

body, however, remembers with interest the little people that Lemuel Gulliver saw, and will always associate them with the name of Swift. But if the stormy Dean had known that his Gulliver book would be mostly relished by young folks, only for its story, and that its tremendous satire—which he intended should cut and draw blood—would have only rarest appreciation, how he would have raved and sworn!

They tell us he had private prayers for his household, and in secluded places; and there are those who sneer at this—"as if a Dean should say prayers in a crypt!" But shall we utterly condemn the poor Publican who—though he sells drams and keeps selling them—smites his bosom *afar off* and cries, God be merciful!—as if there were a bottom somewhere that might be reached, and stirred, and sparkle up with effervescence of hope and truth and purity? He was a man, I think, who would have infinitely scorned and revolted at many of the apologies that have been made for him. To most of these he would have said, in his stentorian way, "I am what I am; no rosy after-lights can alter this shape of imperfect manhood; wrong, God knows; who is not? But a prevaricator—pretending feeling that is

not real—offering friendship that means nothing—proffering gentle words, for hire; never, never!"

And in that great Court of Justice—which I am old-fashioned enough to believe will one day be held—where juries will not be packed, and where truth will shine by its own light, withstanding all perversion—and where opportunities and accomplishment will be weighed in even scales against possible hindrances of moral or of physical makeup—there will show, I am inclined to think, in the strange individuality of Swift, a glimmer of some finer and higher traits of Character than we are accustomed to assign him.

After Stella's death he wrote little:[1] perhaps he furbished up the closing parts of *Gulliver;* there were letters to John Gay, light and gossipy; and to Pope, weightier and spicier.

But the great tree was dying at the top. He grew stingier and sterner, and broke into wild spasms of impatience, such as only a diseased brain could excuse and explain. His loneliness became a more and more fearful thing to be

[1] *The Drapier Letters* were published in 1724. When the successive parts of *Gulliver* were written it is impossible to determine. A portion was certainly in existence as early as 1722. The whole was not published until 1726–27.

borne; but who shall live with this half-mad man of gloom?

At length it is only a hired keeper who can abide with him; yet still he is reckless, proud, defiant, merciless, with no words coming to his fagged brain whereby he may express his thought; having thoughts, but they were bitter ones; having penitences maybe, but very vain ones; having remorses—ah, what abounding ones!

Finally he has no longer the power, if the grace were in him, to ask pardon of the humanity he has wronged; or to tell of the laments —if at that stage he entertained them—over the grave of thwarted purposes and of shattered hopes; condemned to that imbecile silence which overtook him at last, and held him four weary years in fool's grasp, suffering and making blundering unintelligible moans.

He died in 1745—twenty-two years after Vanessa's death—seventeen years after the death of Stella.

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